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Yacob Tesfai

CHRISTIANS vs. LIONS
Brian O'Rourke

HEALTH-CARE REFORM
Good plan, major flaw
Christopher F. Koller

PARADOXES OF FREE TRADE
Kevin Kelly

CATHOLICS 'CONTRA MUNDUM'
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Thanks & blessings

Lahore, Pakistan

To the Editors: I would like to record my gratitude and appreciation for the copies of *Commonweal* that you have been sending me for several years. I enjoy reading the magazine myself and pass it on to several of our priests and sisters who also are happy to read its challenging contents.

I assure you of my prayers for you and all who help you in this most vital work. Please keep us and all our tasks in your prayers, so that we may strive to give vibrant witness to gospel values in our daily lives in the Islamic milieu in which we live and move and have our being.

(MOST REV.) ARMANDO TRINDADE

Cause for anger

Rosemont, Pa.

To the Editors: The farewell note ending both Gerald Weales's "Storytelling: 'Tennessee' & 'Fragments'" [December 17, 1993] and your regular Stage column by this remarkable and eminent critic filled me and, I suspect, many readers with an angry sadness.

Gerald Weales's well-written pieces have been an attractive, valuable jewel in *Commonweal* for many years. His analyses are objective, lucid, and richly provocative. He addresses the underlying assumptions as well as the theatrical effects and cultural significance of plays and playwrights—often with a revealing structural comparison, as he did with Brian Friel and Edward Albee this time, or with *The Song of Jacob Zulu* and *6221, Prophecy and Tragedy* [May 7, 1993]. My students have come to rely on archival issues of *Commonweal* for the most dependable reviews of openings and revivals over the past quarter-century. As a scholar and critic, Gerald Weales sings the songs and can himself tell the stories in ways that give pleasure and evoke thought.

If you go through with your plan to drop the column, please cancel my subscription. If you decide again, as you did in 1971, to reinstate it, please renew my subscription.

JOHN G. KUHN

The writer is professor of English and theater at Rosemont College.

Correction: Because of a mistake in transcription, the last sentence of John Whitman's "Go Away!" in the December 17, 1993, issue was printed incorrectly. It should have read: "But he still lives, walking bent through the night, coming into the yard and going out again, requesting little, offered nothing, tramping that long 'V' in the snow."

Breen got it right

Deal, N.J.

To the Editors: Father Joseph P. Breen's letter [Correspondence, December 3, 1993] addressing the crises facing the priesthood today because of the lack of candidates is cogent and to the point. Especially pertinent is his reference to the duty of those with apostolic authority "to provide and keep open the sacerdotal channels through which God's grace can flow." Is not the theology concerning God's gift of grace to his people and the means for obtaining it intrinsic to Catholicism? If this is not the case, we may as well go back to Luther.

EILEEN KELLY KEAN

Shades of 1907

Chester, Conn.

To the Editors: Here we go again. Fr. Joseph Breen addresses an intelligent letter to the American Catholic bishops and his own parishioners, asking them to reconsider the question of celibacy in the priesthood, and he is forthwith reprimanded and silenced by his own ordinary, Bishop Edward Kmiec of Nashville.

It is not only the question of celibacy that accounts for the shortage of vocations; it is also the authoritarianism emanating from Rome. Obviously, intelligent and educated men (and some day, perhaps, women) will not be attracted to a life in which any expression of independent thinking is promptly silenced—or, to use a more appropriate word, "muzzled."

Shades of the encyclical *Pascendi* issued in 1907 ordering every diocese to establish a committee to guard against the spread of "modernist" ideas condemned in the 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*. This was followed by a new system of censorship aimed at any theologian who might disagree with the pope and his curia, and requiring the clergy to take an oath abjuring any modernist doctrine.

Except for the breath of fresh air brought in by John XXIII, the situation remains the same. In 1990 the Vatican made a new attempt to quash open inquiry and dialogue by reinstating a revised Oath of Fidelity and a Profession of Faith required to be taken by recipients of certain appointments. Unfortunately, because our bishops (with a few notable exceptions) constantly curry favor with Rome, as Fr. Breen put it, "indifference to those authorities has set in, and it is abundantly clear that an incalculably large portion of Catholics...are making their moral decisions without reference to what the established representatives of apostolic authority are saying...."

EDWARD T. DELANEY

(Continued on page 44)

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COMMONWEAL

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A needed conversation

Questions about his personal character, political conviction, and judgment dogged Bill Clinton during the '92 presidential campaign and followed him into the White House last January. After the administration's "near-death" experience with the near defeat of the budget bill last spring, Clinton was written off by many as yet another Democratic president destined for failure in Washington, a predictable victim of Republican obstructionism and Democratic party factionalism.

Seven months later the political terrain, while still uncertain, looks quite different. Significant doubts remain about Clinton and about the general efficacy of government. Wrenching economic and social changes have left tens of millions of Americans dissatisfied with the quality of their lives, anxious about the future, and distrustful of politics. But at the end of his first year in office Clinton has shown himself to be a man of personal resiliency and formidable political determination. And we say this despite our own deep aversion to Clinton's support of state-funded abortions.

Clinton's first-year record of legislative achievement, stretching from the budget-deficit reduction package to NAFTA, gun control, and national service, rivals that of any president in recent memory. Moreover, thanks to Clinton's rhetorical skills and obvious moral passion, realistic health-care and welfare reform finally have been put on the national agenda. Equally important, especially after more than a decade of benign neglect, has been Clinton's willingness to use the office of the presidency as a bully pulpit to call the nation's moral attention to the plague of crime, violence, and despair afflicting the poor. Indeed, Clinton's commitment to a wide-ranging political conversation in which all Americans have a voice is the most encouraging aspect of his presidency.

Admittedly, Clinton's performance in foreign affairs has been erratic. His response to the ongoing slaughter in Bosnia has been especially disappointing and the post-cold war world may yet present problems, in North Korea or Russia, for example, requiring the rarest combination of diplomatic skill and moral courage. Still, Clinton's devotion to his domestic agenda has largely paid off. The president's growing popularity in public opinion polls would seem to suggest that Americans still have a tolerance for activist government.

The bipartisan majorities Clinton marshaled in support of NAFTA and the Brady gun-control bill seem to be harbingers of the kind of nonideological coalitions needed to reshape the medical and welfare systems. As Clinton said in December to the Democractic Leadership Council (DLC), governing "requires the accommodation of various interests all across the country in the private sector and requires a partnership with people at the state and local level; having the best ideas in the world does not free you of the obligation to make difficult decisions."

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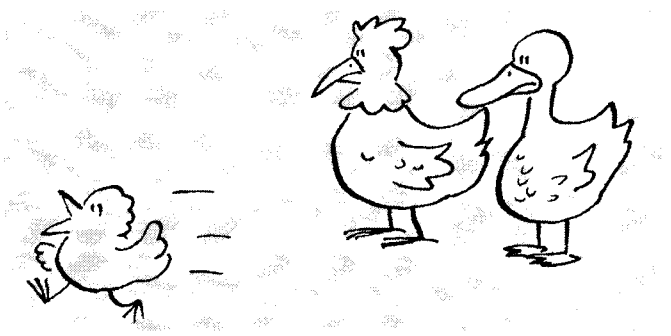
In other words, in democratic politics people with conflicting interests must see those interests fairly represented. For example, the DLC thinks Clinton's health-care proposal, with its emphasis on universal coverage rather than tax credits for the poor, is too bureaucratic, too vulnerable to the Republican "more big-government" refrain. On the other hand, for those Democrats further to the left, the Clinton plan's reliance on private insurance companies is seen as capitulation to the status quo. Why can't we follow the single-payer model of Canada, they ask.

In heath care, as on questions of free trade, gays in the military, entitlement spending, and the host of other issues facing the nation, Clinton has demonstrated what some call political realism and others political expediency. His solutions—government regulation here, some competition there, support for gays combined with respect for the military, etc.—seem designed to make everyone equally unhappy. Maybe that's why they seem to be drawing reluctant support across a wide range of political tendencies.

Similarly, and most important, whatever your view of the art of politics or the unfair distribution of wealth, it is clear to Clinton that any hope for a progressive politics must, should, and can include the middle class. "We must fight their fight," Clinton said to the DLC of the Democratic party's need to win back the middle-class majority. "We must give voice to their concerns. We must honor those basic values of opportunity, responsiblity, and community, of work and family and faith."

Much, we fear, is riding on Clinton's success in forging reciprocal ties between America's haves and have-nots. As Thomas B. Edsall wrote recently in the *Washington Post National Weekly Edition* (December 6, 1993), a volatile mix of political and social instability and polarization lies just beneath the surface of American life. Working-class wages continue two decades of debilitating decline. Families, especially those at the bottom of the economic ladder, continue to fragment with devastating social costs. Civic order and peace are increasingly privileges only the well-to-do enjoy. Edsall suggests that Democratic party elites, eager to embrace free trade and other market-oriented policies, are in danger of alienating the party's base among working- and lower-middle class voters. For Americans with minimal skills, the new global economy promises little but unemployment and further marginalization. Traditional Democratic voters, as the election of Republican mayors in New York City and Los Angeles suggest, are in fact more skeptical about the political process than more articulate cynics higher up the socioeconomic ladder. Forging a national consensus for government action under these circumstances is a herculean task.

"At the moment, no group or institution has mobilized the wrath and resentment of a major portion of the electorate," Edsall wrote. He worries that demagogic forces may come into play unless the legitimate needs of displaced and alienated Americans are met. Only a politics of inclusion and hope will do that. President Clinton, it would appear, knows that. Doing something about the nation's increasing social and economic disparities won't be easy, nor is government itself necessarily the answer to these problems. But a president can set the tone and the direction of the national debate. In his best moments—speaking in Memphis to black ministers about violence or insisting that universal health care is a moral imperative—Bill Clinton has promoted just the sort of democratic conversation we need. Let's have more of it.



"Moral standards are falling! Moral standards are falling!"

ET CETERA

A WORD OF WISDOM With Tryon Baldwin's toast to the "Sisters of Caramel" in the issue of December 17, 1993, we launched a new occasional feature but for lack of space we could not introduce it properly. "The Last Word" will provide a home for short (roughly 750-word) essays, reprints of memorable pieces from *Commonweal*'s past, and, perhaps, longish passages from both old and new books that strike us as worthy. And other stuff.

If "The Last Word" in this issue (page 46) seems familiar to you, you're probably a longtime *Commonweal* reader. Alternatively, you may once have been an editor of *America*. The piece is a column by John Cogley, first published in these pages more than thirty-five years ago. It describes a particular temptation that can lead writers on public affairs (editors, too) to betray their best selves and their calling. One of the more geriatrically enhanced members of the staff still remembers the response Cogley's essay engendered on first reading: a mix of admiration and concern (could this apply to *me*?).

It seems the column made a strong impression at *America* as well. In a brief bio of Cogley appearing in an expanded 1986 edition of Cogley's 1973 book *Catholic America*, historian Rodger Van Allen writes that one of the Jesuit weekly's editors had the column photocopied and framed and hung it outside the door to the editorial board room at America House, where it stayed for many years. Could be this story is apocryphal (a present-day *America* staffer says the piece isn't on the wall now and nobody he consulted could remember seeing it), but it prompts us to grant universal permission to all writers and editors to put the column on their own walls, or into their heads.

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DRAWING LINES

QUINDLEN, KISSLING & US

Two years ago, *Commonweal* published an interview with Anna Quindlen. Alex Santora's friendly, almost pastoral, conversation with the *New York Times*'s premiere woman columnist (February 14, 1992) led to accusations of soft-ball questions and several canceled subscriptions. Last spring we ran a review (May 21, 1993) by Kenneth Woodward of Ms. Quindlen's essays, *Thinking Out Loud*. Some readers took indecent pleasure in it and others found it mean. Several more cancellations followed.

"What is this love/hate relationship you guys have with Anna Quindlen?" asked one of our remaining readers.

Did "we guys" have a love/hate relationship with Anna Quindlen? Or did her fellow Catholics, our readers?

When she wrote her weekly "In the Thirties" column, Anna Quindlen had sensible and witty views of husbands, children, and the domestic environs; the one *Times* voice on family life not in thrall to Anna Freud or Planned Parenthood. She subsequently moved to her present perch, "Public and Private" on the op-ed page, where her somnambulant colleagues needed a dusting up. She did the job. I came to think of Anna Quindlen as a sister mouth.

But two columns a week take their toll; a certain predictability set in. Quindlen, nonetheless, remains an influential voice who, for better or worse, shapes a portion of the public discussion about Catholicism. And when she returned to the op-ed page from a leave of absence this last fall, there was a sprinkling of new ideas, a sense of new energy, even a hint that her brand of liberalism needed a little rethinking.

But then she went and wrote one of her totally predictable columns: she attacked the Catholic bishops for drawing a line (*New York Times*, November 18, 1993).

Step back a minute.

This past November, the administrative committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement saying that Catholics for a Free Choice, a Washington prochoice advocacy group, "has no affiliation, formal or otherwise, with the Catholic church." It is "associated with the pro-abortion lobby in Washington..." and "can in no way speak for the Catholic church and its 59 million members in the United States." The statement concludes: "Because of its opposition to the human rights of some of the most defenseless members of the human race, and because its purposes and activities deliberately contradict essential teachings of the Catholic faith, we state once again that Catholics for a Free Choice merits no recognition or support as a Catholic organization."

Catholics for a Free Choice and its executive director, Frances Kissling, had been given a lot of sound-bite time during the pope's Denver visit, representing (as the media like to say) the vast majority of faithful but dissenting Catholics. The bishops objected; so do a lot of faithful, dissenting Catholics. Catholics for a Free Choice 'R' not us.

The bishops' statement is careful. It does not condemn CFFC nor excommunicate Kissling. The statement does not even say that CFFC had to stop using the word "Catholic" in its title. It simply says CFFC isn't an authentic Catholic organization. IBM could say as much about the knock-offs that pass for its hallmark personal computers.

But the statement isn't perfect either; it complains that the CFFC "shares an address and funding sources with the National Abortion Federation." Sharing an address doesn't seem proof of much. But the sources of CFFC's funding do raise a legitimate question: Isn't the word "Catholic" in CFFC's title key to its successful fund-raising efforts with the the Ford and MacArthur foundations? As Cardinal Roger Mahony comments on the letters page of the *Times*: "Without [the word Catholic in their title], they would be a tiny element in the pro-abortion lobby."

But Anna Quindlen will have none of this. She sees the bishops' statement as "an unusual, almost unparalleled attack" on the CFFC. For her, Kissling's position on church teaching is legitimate because conscience is something individuals make up all by themselves. This is a widely held view in our society, but not a Catholic one. Quindlen goes on to characterize John Paul II's *Veritatis splendor* as "a learned explication of the concept that Catholics will know what's right when bishops tell them." In fact, the pope had a good deal to say about conscience and how it relates to an objective moral order. But, as is her tendency, Quindlen refers only fleetingly to factual matters while sprinting to another point.

"Happily [the bishops' attack on dissidents] is not a crisis in many individual parishes. Priests still go about the business of inclusion, saying Mass alongside women deacons [!], placing Communion in the cupped hands of divorced parishioners, developing spiritual relationships." There is a neat division of labor in this ecclesiology—parish priests are in charge of the Good News and the bishops in charge of the Bad.

Quindlen also informs us that the word Catholic is a description, not a registered trademark. And as Frances Kissling describes herself, "she fits the description. 'I was baptized, I was confirmed,' she says. 'I am a Catholic woman.'"

"Catholic" may not be a registered trademark, regardless of the provisions about its use in Canon Law. But does saying "baptized, confirmed, Catholic woman" confer legitimacy in speaking on things Catholic?

A lot of unsavory and ill-informed people have been baptized, confirmed, even ordained in the Catholic church. We could name names. Somewhere along the line they forsook the description and stopped being authentically Catholic. This happens. Not everything we do or say is "Catholic," even when Catholics do and say it. That seems to be all the bishops are saying about Catholics for a Free Choice.

Commonweal, of course, has had to face this question. The

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magazine does not blazon itself Catholic nor pretend to represent dissent, the laity, or any other large category. It is the independent effort of its editors, who are Roman Catholic lay people. No more, no less. But we too get invitations from the media. And *Commonweal* too, in its long history, has been labeled "not Catholic," banned from seminaries by individual bishops, etc., etc.

Naturally the editors disagreed with these judgments, but not with the principle that bishops sometimes have to draw lines. And not because the journal's dissenting positions were products of "baptized, confirmed" writers. Ultimately those positions had to be shown to be faithful to the Catholic Christian tradition of understanding and living the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It is serious engagement with that tradition that is neglected by Catholics for a Free Choice—and by Anna Quindlen's defense of CFFC. CFFC makes occasional, highly selective bows to the tradition in its literature, and virtually no references, except querulous ones, in its many media forays. Quindlen unfortunately displays little knowledge of her tradition beyond, at best, that of a high school senior.

Dissent from church teaching, at least on some matters, is a long, noble, and battered, tradition in the Catholic church starting with Paul of Tarsus. Those who count themselves in that tradition must always attend to the possibility that at some point they are more dissenter than they are Catholic. In ages past, Catholics knew when they had crossed the line because they could have been burned at the stake. Now they are more apt to be rushed into print or taped for the evening news.

One of the prices the church pays for its past intolerance is reflexive rejection of its attempts to draw lines. If the bishops finally say that Catholics for a Free Choice is not an "authentic Catholic organization," their judgment deserves at least a careful hearing and a reasoned response, even from Anna Quindlen.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

REPORT ON GATT

PARADOXES OF FREE TRADE

READ THE FINE PRINT

While arguments about the pros and cons of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) filled the airwaves last fall, a far more muscular trade accord was being hammered out by the world's major economic powers with scant attention paid the proceedings. Now, suddenly, the agreement reached on December 15, 1993, by the 117 countries party to the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has set the stage for the most expansive free-trade regime the modern world has ever known. Says Donald Fites, chairman of construction equipment manufacturer Caterpillar, Inc.: "The GATT agreement creates a tariffless world economy fourteen times the size of NAFTA."

This is hardly an understatement. The new deal will slash tariffs blocking the free flow of manufactured goods, rewarding U.S. companies like Caterpillar with open access to once shuttered markets in Europe and Asia. Agricultural subsidies in industrial countries will be cut 21 percent over six years, giving a boost to lower-cost U.S. farm products. The agreement will also limit the money governments can spend on basic research, a favorite tactic in Japan, forcing private industry to foot the bill. The impact? By the year 2002, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development predicts, the pact could boost worldwide merchandise trade by up to 10 percent annually, or $270 billion.

The biggest victors are a broad range of industries where tariffs will plummet to near zero. For big manufacturers like Deere & Co. and medical device makers like Medtronic, Inc., tariffs in the industrial world, where 75 percent of world trade is concentrated, will disappear. Tariffs will also vanish in the construction equipment, furniture, whiskey, pharmaceutical, paper, and steel industries. The resulting upsurge in demand for U.S. products, says the Clinton administration, will produce 1.2 million new jobs by the year 2000.

But not everyone is overjoyed. The U.S. movie industry wanted GATT to ban European quotas on U.S. programming. That didn't happen. France, particularly, argued that nations needed some control over popular media to preserve indigenous culture. Drug companies failed to gain protection for their intellectual property rights in the third world for another ten years, which heightens worries that new products might be hijacked. And U.S. textile manufacturers worry that cheap imports could wipe out over 1 million jobs once tariffs are removed ten years hence.

Undoubtedly GATT, initiated in 1948 to remove barriers to the trade of manufactured goods, has helped fuel economic growth. But this, the seventh round, has gone one step further. It has attempted to enshire free trade as the defining principle in the international economic system, by making any quotas, perceived barriers, or tariffs, for whatever purpose, illegal.

Most troubling are the limits GATT will place on domestic social policies. NAFTA, in part, was about imposing a particular social and economic system on Mexico so that corporations could feel secure investing there over the long term. By codifying in a treaty certain practices—like the free flow of goods across borders—the U.S. permanently limited the role of the traditionally interventionist Mexican government. The Uruguay Round of GATT does basically the same thing for the rest of the world.

The current agreement proposes the creation of a new United Nations-like organization called the Multilateral Trading Organization (MTO) that would settle commercial disputes between countries. At least in principle, the new body stands as a threat to national sovereignty and could permit governments to challenge other countries' protections of the environment,

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workplace health and safety, and social programs on the grounds they constitute restraint of trade.

Not that the present GATT system doesn't already interfere in local decision making. In one landmark case, GATT administrators determined that the U.S. can't restrict imports of tuna caught by methods that needlessly kill dolphins. It's likely such cases will multiply, since the new deal seeks to harmonize environmental and health regulations between countries. Indeed, if any nation wants to impose standards above an international minimum, it would have to meet tough requirements. Under this regime, the current European effort to have American clean air standards labeled an unfair trade practice is more likely to succeed.

If this scenario plays out, GATT may end up undermining local democratic institutions at the behest of free trade. It may also end up stunting economic and technological progress. Many U.S. industries, like the heavy-duty truck engine business, have become world beaters because they've had to develop new products to meet tough U.S. regulations, such as the Clean Air Act. If those measures can be challenged in the MTO, important innovations, that not only make a profit but improve the environment, might be lost.

More than anything, the recent rush to free trade reflects growing concern on behalf of world business and political leaders that slower economic growth can be sidestepped only by creating bigger markets. Corporations like Caterpillar are petrified that slower growth will mean dwindling profits. Governments worry about the job loss. But a larger customer base will produce higher sales only if governments learn to coordinate monetary, fiscal, and spending policies to promote growth. GATT doesn't nearly address that problem.

Certainly the Uruguay Round will produce some new business for many companies. But if it undermines local political institutions and fails to produce the stimulus the world economy so desperately needs, it may be time for the world leaders to say goodbye to the process and figure out a new strategy for the twenty-first century. KEVIN KELLY

Kevin Kelly writes for Business Week. *He lives in Chicago.*

REPORT ON HEALTH-CARE REFORM

GOOD PLAN, MAJOR FLAW

MARKET FORCES CAN'T CONTAIN COSTS

You would think the child of a health maintenance organization manager would have the sense to arrive in this world in a cost-effective manner, but not our son. First, by hanging around eighteen days past his due date, Benjamin incurred extra tests, as obstetricians assessed the continued ability of his mother's womb to support this latecomer. Then after a birth with no major complications, he and his mother stayed two extra days in the hospital while pediatricians verified that his brief fever was due only to temporary dehydration.

Now, a year later, while Benjamin is wreaking havoc in our house, nothing in President Bill Clinton's plan to reform health-care delivery and financing in the U.S., nor any of the numerous counterproposals, addresses the root causes of rising costs (and the resulting inequity) in the U.S. health system; the forces that added about two thousand dollars to the cost of Benjamin's delivery, with no difference in outcome.

To be sure, there is plenty to applaud in the plan. The president and Mrs. Clinton have succeeded in their most important challenges—making some sort of reform inevitable, and making universal access a *sine qua non* of their plan. These are impressive sea changes in public attitude. The chief means to these ends are equally laudable. The plan continues the trend of emphasizing the importance of primary care and primary-care physicians. Its proposed benefit package focuses on immunizations, physicals, and preventive care.

The plan also manages to gore one of the more sacred (and costly) cows in the health-care pasture by having everyone contribute directly to the financing of their health-care premiums and service co-payments on a means-tested basis. The absence of these elements from most employer-sponsored insurance programs and the fact that health benefits are currently nontaxable have contributed to over-utilization of health-care resources in the past. Similarly, mandated community rating, in which an insurance company charges one price for its basic package to all purchasers rather than varying it by the individual group's experience and unfairly penalizing costly individuals, is a significant step toward a more equitable system.

While chafing the wrists of some physicians who genuflect toward the altar of autonomy, the plan's emphasis on integrated health-care networks (essentially today's HMOs) is also a movement in the right direction. The process of providing effective, efficient care is too complex for all involved (hospitals, physicians, and financiers) not to have a mutual stake in its success. Freedom of physician choice, another would-be pillar of health-care services in the U.S., would be limited slightly (you would select the network which has your doctor), but the plan allows all citizens to choose a (presumably higher priced) package with no limits on provider choice.

Finally, one of the more poorly understood attributes of the proposed plans is also one of its strongest. "Health Alliances" are giant purchasing cooperatives through which all but the largest employers would purchase their health insurance, providing economies of scale and ensuring a uniform regional health insurance market. While administration of these alliances may be problematic, their potential for ensuring equal access, including integration of Medicaid and Medicare populations into a general pool for health-care financing and delivery (rather than isolation and stigmatization), is significant.

In short, the plan is Clintonesque: determinedly idealistic yet politically pragmatic. That said, its basic drawback lies in its faith in another American tenet: the power of the market to cut costs and allocate resources efficiently. Cost containment in

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the plan occurs primarily by informed individual customers (newly vitalized with their higher financial participation) selecting efficient health plans. Yet our society cannot financially or morally rely on the invisible hand to allocate limited health-care resources among numerous treatments and patients. Everybody cannot have everything, and limits must be agreed to consensually.

A solely market-based paradigm ignores that demand for health-care resources—specialty care, pharmaceuticals, or diagnostic testing—expands to utilize the supply available. Without real nonmarket-based limits to the supply of health-care resources, cost containment is wishful thinking. In the case of our son, twenty years ago, prior to the advent of ultrasonic examination, labor for post-due-date babies was either induced or waited out, sometimes with tragic consequences. Now, in theory, health plans would be motivated to separate unnecessary from necessary testing—a rather optimistic assessment of their capacities. In another example, lax state approval efforts have resulted in twenty-two Magnetic Resonance Imaging Units in western New York state alone, more than the entire country of Canada. When resources become available they will become the "standard of care" (who are we say no to an ultrasound to make sure our baby is all right?) whether or not they change patient outcomes.

The story is the same for specialty care. Research has shown the number of surgical procedures per capita in a region to be the function primarily of the number of surgeons available, prompting calls for "professional birth control." Currently six of every seven medical residents selects specialty care rather than primary care. The Clinton plan, while attempting to address the issue, adequately adjusts the graduating or practicing mix of M.D.'s closer to the 50/50 ratio usually considered optimal.

Finally, a market-based reform will not address the inequities in the allocation of expensive last-resort technologies. Currently, their dissemination occurs in a haphazard manner, driven by academic medical centers and zealous patient advocates anxious to combat a tragic untimely death, such as the pediatric cancer victim. There is no mechanism to insure the equity of their use, or evaluate their relative merits.

There is little in the plan to promote less technologically intensive deaths. Between the extremes of a fear-induced "do everything at all costs" command from the patient's family and the right-to-die movement lies a death which respects mortality and its power over us—what Daniel Callahan refers to as a "good death." Too often, expensive and fruitless end-of-life interventions result from poor preparation and communication among the patient's family and physicians, and a culture which fails to acknowledge limits. Expansion of the Medicare Patient Self-Determination Act, and simplification of the often abstruse or legalistic language of living wills and other advanced directives (the state of New York's "Health Care Proxy" is an admirable exception to this) would be welcome additions.

Finally, the Clinton plan fails one of the principles the president himself set out in his address to Congress last September—simplicity. Some complexity is inevitable, given the scale of the endeavor. Beyond the concepts of "health-care security" and "preservation of choice," however, the administration's message to the public has been muddled. The financing of the plan remains particularly arcane, with numerous partially developed sources of revenues and poorly articulated consequences for citizens. Members of Congress have complained they should not be asked to vote for something they could not explain to their constituents.

The administration is trying to dodge a big bullet—the tax word. Yet giving 37 million uninsured people health-care insurance and improving the coverage of millions more guarantees additional expenses. Estimates of cost savings are inspired guesses, and the proposed patchwork financing strains the synapses and the credulity of the public.

The conceptually clearest alternative to "managed competition"—the administration's proposal to create a market for health-care services and insurance by defining a common product, developing saftey-net and financial-assistance packages, and then letting the market make production more efficient—is the single-payer system, in which the government would take over the insurance and financing function completely. Supporters for such a plan point north to Canada, whose single-payer plan boasts equal or better patient health status, universal access, and high patient satisfaction with low per capita health-care expenses. Managed competition, they maintain, is a ruse concocted by large insurance companies who will expand their control and limit patient choices. Detractors, however, raise the specter of socialized medicine and an interventionist government, greater constraints on physician practice, and queues for complex medical services. Cost constraints are minimal, they say, noting that rates of increase in Canadian health-care expenses rival those in the United States.

Single-payer proposals, which have attracted a strong minority of supporters in Congress, represent in theory the best prospect for diminishing the strength of the pharmaceutical, diagnostic technology, and high-tech medical intervention industries: the unholy alliance responsible for inducing and feeding our society's demand for the best and the most advanced treatment, in the name of medical progress and individual choice. In practice, however, single-payer plans face entrenched opposition from powerful interests and a public wary of government bureaucracy and any hint of limits to treatment options. The biggest difference between the Canadian and U.S. health systems, some have observed, is the patient.

The prospects for the passage of reform legislation in 1994 are real, but the prospects for Clinton's reform plan, unamended, are nil. President Clinton has said he is ready to compromise on major portions so long as universal coverage is maintained and numerous congressional counterproposals appear ready to take him at his word. The chief battles figure to be fought around benefit definitions and financing.

The most rancorous benefit is sure to be abortion coverage, which the Clintons finesse with an "include but discourage" position. Podiatrists, chiropractors, mental-health advocates, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and others will all lobby to get their piece of the pie as well. On the financing side, detractors will question whether mandated employer provision of health ben-

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efits is economically wise or necessary. Revenue and expense proposals and estimates will come under close scrutiny and continuous revision, and advocates of a single-payer proposal will lobby to make their option available to any state that favors such a system.

Finally, three powerful advocacy groups will want to get their licks in. Physicians will advocate for less intervention by the government or anything else in their work; insurance companies will try to dismantle the proposed health alliances to strengthen their future role; and lobbyists for the elderly will attempt to preserve as much of the preferential cost and benefit treatment provided through Medicare as they can.

In the face of this complexity, discerning questions need to be asked. The U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1986 pastoral letter on the economy, *Economic Justice for All*, asked "what does a health-care delivery and financing system do to people and for people?" The core of the debate over health-care reform addresses the merits of governmental activism. No reform proposal which fails to enhance the dignity of the human individual by ensuring the universal availability of health care for future generations merits consideration. More than many other human rights, equal distribution of health-care resources is a moral imperative for a society. Much as we have come to fear the ability of our government to do anything well but incur debt, the imperative of health-care reform will require a significant governmental role. Like Churchill's democracy, government activism in health-care delivery and financing may be acceptable only in comparison to all the known alternatives.

CHRISTOPHER F. KOLLER

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A THANK YOU NOTE

CATHOLICS 'CONTRA MUNDUM'

THEY GET SOME THINGS RIGHT

I suppose a case could be made from 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 that Saint Paul would be greatly distressed by the divisions in the Christian church today. But I'm not so sure about that. What would upset him, I think, would be not so much the fact that Christendom is divided into Presbyterians, Catholics, Pentecostals, Eastern Orthodox, and so forth, but the lack of love and mutual respect to be found within individual congregations and traditions and among various Christian bodies. Human beings, after all, are going to disagree about things until the Kingdom comes. In spite of all the progress we've made, there are a good many areas of serious difference between us. That's not unhealthy, in my view. What matters is the spirit in which the disagreeing gets done.

Personally, I am not so interested in the obvious issues that we read about in the newspapers—matters like the ordination of women, birth control, unmarried clergy. Believe it or not, that's the easy stuff. The really big-time issues are the theological ones. Recently I was somewhat taken aback to realize just how much disagreement there still is between Protestants and Catholics in crucial areas such as the role of Holy Scripture; what happens in the Mass; the definition of sin; the Immaculate Conception; relics and sacramentals; prayers to the saints; and above all the whole question of justification by grace through faith alone. On these matters we cannot at present find unity. I feel no dismay about this; as Christian brothers and sisters, we can certainly disagree without being disagreeable. Saint Paul was the last man on earth to want to smooth out theological differences. The Apostle made his appeal to the quarreling Corinthians on the basis of mutual love in Christ.

What I would like to reflect on is neither our disagreement nor our agreements, but as a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate our larger unity in the Lord. I bring a message of encouragement to you in a time when, I would imagine, that it is not easy to be Roman Catholic. Shortly before his death, the *New York Times* quoted the late Father Timothy Healy to the effect that the only permissible prejudice in America today is anti-Catholicism. I have been noticing this for years myself: racism is a no-no; gay-bashing is out; anti-Semitism is unthinkable; but anti-Catholicism seems to be downright fashionable. It's hip to rip the cardinal.

Many of us Protestants, however, if we are honest, will admit that the Roman Catholic church has been standing in the breach where many of us have retreated from the front. You have been suffering crucifixion in the world on behalf of us all. Mainline Protestantism has made so many accommodations to contemporary culture as to be almost indistinguishable from it sometimes. That is the reason for my gratitude to you. Let me give just a few examples.

First, the Roman Catholic church has continued to insist on the importance of bodily life before God. The whole spectrum of sexual behavior is included here, for as Saint Paul teaches, also in I Corinthians 6:19-20, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit....You are not the owner of your own body, you were bought with a price; so glorify God in your body." Your tradition holds fast to this central teaching in a number of other important ways: the prohibition of euthanasia; a strong stand against suicide; having the body present at funerals, and holding to the ancient custom of Christian burial; keeping everyone's feet to the fire on the abortion question; and your voice heard round the world against torture and any other violation of the human body. I myself am very thankful to Governor Mario Cuomo for his courageous and principled stand against capital punishment. We Protestants may disagree about details of these matters, but Christians of all persuasions can be deeply grateful to the Catholic church for not letting any of us forget that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Second, when I read of martyrs like Archbishop Romero, the Jesuit priests, the Maryknoll nuns, and most recently the five nuns in Liberia, I give thanks to God that he is glorified in these witnesses, who laid down their lives to defend the defenseless. I thank God for the Roman Catholic church around

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the world, fighting tirelessly for human rights. No one said it better than Murray Kempton in a 1987 *New York Review of Books* article:

> In the thirteenth century, Catholicism was unknown outside Europe, but it is now a universal force. From Cardinal Sin down the hierarchy to the simplest nuns, the Philippine church was a critical factor in the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos. A Korean archbishop is changing the face of his country's regime. In Poland and Nicaragua, Chile and El Salvador, churchmen stand reproaching and resisting the excesses of the state. Even unbelievers like myself have to concede that the Catholic church has become the steadiest, and in many places the only, defender of human rights the wide world can show.

Third: the Catholic church has steadfastly shown herself to be *contra mundum* when necessary, "against the world," against the prevailing cultural trends. This requires enormous courage. In an era when the Protestant mainline churches have experimented with everything from reincarnation to witchcraft to inventing one's own marriage vows, the Catholic church has held fast to the Apostles' Creed. In a time when many leaders of Protestant denominations have abandoned theology for sociology, psychology, and anthropology, the Catholic church's teaching office continues to set forth the truths of God *sub specie aeternitatis*—from the perspective of eternity. As Flannery O'Connor remarked, "the truth as Christians know it [is] a light to see the world by," and not, one might add, the other way round. In this confidence, the bishops of your church have continued to speak the truth boldly to the world. None of the Protestant bodies has done anything comparable to the Catholic bishops' statements on nuclear weapons and the economy. (It seems to me that the bishops' inability to agree on a statement about women was a very good sign.)

I do not intend to idealize or romanticize Roman Catholicism. There are many pressing problems facing you, and we would find ourselves on opposite sides of the fence from time to time. What binds us, however, is far stronger than what divides us. I am reminded of the refrain used so often by Pope John Paul II on his American trips: "Praised be Jesus Christ." That is the irreducible core of our faith. "Praised be Jesus Christ." That is what Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox all have in common: "Praised be Jesus Christ."

In writing to the Romans, Saint Paul noted that "While we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly" (5:6). And again, "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (5:8). As Graham Greene put it in *The Power and the Glory*, "It was for this world that Christ had died: the more evil you saw and heard around you, the greater glory lay around the death: it was too easy to die for what was good or beautiful...it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt." How different this is from the American gospel, "God helps those who help themselves"!

Martin Luther gave us many expressions which later became watchwords of the Reformation. One of them was *simul peccator et iustus*—saints and sinners simultaneously. That's the word from this Protestant corner today. Christ died for the ungodly, the half-hearted, and the corrupt—while we were still helpless. Praised be Jesus Christ. He died to save us before we could make a single move to save ourselves. "While we were still helpless." To him, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit be glory, honor, dominion, and power, now and forever. Amen.

FLEMING RUTLEDGE

The Rev. Mrs. Fleming Rutledge is the pastor of Grace Episcopal Church in New York City. This article is based on a sermon preached at New York's Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Greenwich Village, January 24, 1993.

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

A MAN TO REMEMBER

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., MORAL HERO

A few years back, Lynn Cheney, who was then head of the National Endowment for the Humanities (she's also the wife of former Defense Secretary Richard Cheney), wrote an interesting essay titled "American Memory." She deplored the deficient sense of history that Americans, especially young Americans, suffer from nowadays. She said that without an adequate awareness of where we were yesterday, we can hardly know where we are today and certainly cannot decide where we ought to go tomorrow.

Days like the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, days on which we commemorate the lives and achievements of our great national heroes, provide us with occasions to renew contact with our history, and, like Atlas touching the earth, to recruit our energies for future national tasks.

The great figures of our nation's history—e.g., Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln—stand the test of time. No matter how often we reexamine their lives and careers, we continue to discover new levels of significance. True enough, this continual study reveals their shortcomings; but it reveals also a genuine greatness that throws these imperfections into the shade.

Too often we forget that Martin Luther King, Jr., was a minister of the Christian religion, speaking of him as though he were nothing more than a gifted political leader. Without question, he was a social and political reformer: one of the greatest in the long history of this reform-addicted nation. But he was much more. Remember the wonderfully paradoxical lines from Lovelace: "I could not love thee, Dear, so much/Loved I not Honor more." King could not have been so great a reformer had he not been something better than a mere reformer. His social reform

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activities were the spontaneous overflow of a richly endowed, marvelously cultivated spirit and personality.

Since his death, of course, we have learned much about his imperfections. His adulteries would be relatively minor blemishes on the record of a mere politician. But King came before us as more than that, as a kind of saint: the American Gandhi. And adulteries don't fit easily into the curriculum vitae of a saint. More recently we have learned about the plagiarized passages in his doctoral dissertation at Boston University. If you are one of those who agree with Dante's assignment of liars to a deeper circle of hell than adulterers, this latter offense seems even more of a stain than the former. To those who always disliked him because of the cause he represented, these revelations have been a boon; now they can dismiss him with contempt as a pious fraud. But for those of us who observed him in his prime and regarded him as the clearest witness in our age to the reality of spirit, these revelations have been disheartening. Did we get it wrong when we viewed him as a saint for our times? Was it a false light he shed? Was it a false inspiration we drew from him?

For the Calvinist, the saint is always a saint, from the first moment of existence straight through to eternity. From this point of view it is difficult to understand how the saint could possibly lapse into serious sin, the commission of which seems presumptive evidence that the sinner in question is a mere sinner and no saint at all. But from the Catholic point of view there is no difficulty in understanding that even saints might have their bad days—or weeks or months or years. It was this Catholic theory of the dialectic between sin and sanctity that Graham Greene used to exploit in his novels.

King, the Baptist, was closer to the Calvinist tradition of Christianity than to the Catholic tradition; yet his sanctity is more easily understood on the Catholic theory than the Puritan theory. It isn't a question of balancing his virtues against his vices and then calculating which side of the scale has the net advantage. It is a question rather of what he was at bottom. Was he an inveterate cheater who happened to have a knack for charismatic leadership? Or was he what he seemed to be, a sinful yet God-intoxicated man whose faith, inseparable from his very self, led him down the road to a foreseen martyrdom?

Martin Luther King, Jr., it seems to me, was a striking example of what Henri Bergson called the "moral hero." Moral heroes, according to Bergson, transcend particular connections and loyalties. They rise above all particularity to the level of the universal, the level of the truly human. They call to that which is universal in all of us, and there is something in us that responds to that "call of the hero."

Some follow the call; some are moved to admiration but fail to follow; and some hate the hero, not because they fail to hear the call but precisely because they do hear it and feel it pulling away from their lives of particular, narrow attachments. They sense that the hero is demanding of them a change of life, a moral revolution. It seems so much easier to hate the moral hero, even to wish the hero dead, than to renounce old loyalties and change our lives. Thus the hero inevitably risks career, reputation, life itself.

This is a paradox. Moral heroes, more than anyone else, affirm the absolute dignity, the infinite value of the human person. Yet they put their lives on the line every day, walking down paths that lead to injury, to insult, to the worst sort of humiliations, even to death. If the dignity of the human person is so important to them, how can they subject their own persons to such indignities?

The answer, of course, is that human life is precious because it involves the possibility of participating in values even more precious than life, values so precious they are worth not only living for but dying for as well. Moral heroes are great because they call us to these values, and in doing so call us to our own highest possibilities. To verify the reality of those possibilities and the values that define them, they are willing to sacrifice their own lives. Moral heroes rarely die peacefully in bed.

America has always been fortunate in her national heroes, but rarely more fortunate than in the case of Martin Luther King, Jr., who, warts and all, is as much a great figure in our moral history as in our political history. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

HEY! SQUASH IT!

AN EPIDEMIC OF SANITY?

Every once in a while a book first published in 1841 begins to draw attention again. It is issued once more by a new publisher with a newer, more up-to-date foreward. That book, given to me recently, is *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* by Charles Mackay.

The version I have is that of 1980 with a foreword by Andrew Tobias. This version has, however, footnotes dated 1992. Says Tobias, "...for each of us there has to be that first time we learn of this book, that first reading of it." There is for each first reader, he says, the compulsion to recommend it. He points out that financier Bernard Baruch did just that in *his* foreward to the 1932 edition.

"Have you ever seen," Baruch quoted an unnamed contemporary,

> in some wood, on a sunny quiet day, a cloud of flying midges—thousands of them—hovering, apparently motionless, in a sunbeam?... Yes?...Well, did you ever see the whole flight—each mite apparently preserving its distance from all others—suddenly move, say three feet, to one side or the other? Well, what made them do that? A breeze? I said a quiet day. But try to recall—did you ever see them move directly back again in the same unison?

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Well, what made them do that? Great human mass movements are slower of inception but much more effective.

Tobias goes on a bit later,

Baruch quotes Schiller: "Anyone taken as an individual is tolerably sensible and reasonable—as a member of a crowd, he at once becomes a blockhead." There are lynch mobs and there are crusades; there are runs on banks and there are fires where, if only people hadn't panicked, they would have escaped with their lives....And there was the mass suicide at Jonestown.

Charles Mackay's original book was largely about mass movements that had to do with money mania. They included John Law's Mississippi Scheme, the South Sea Bubble originated by Lord Harley of Oxford, and the wild and wonderful "Tulipomania" of seventeenth-century Holland. But he included also those like "the Witch Mania" and its "terrific progress in Germany." His purpose was a general one:

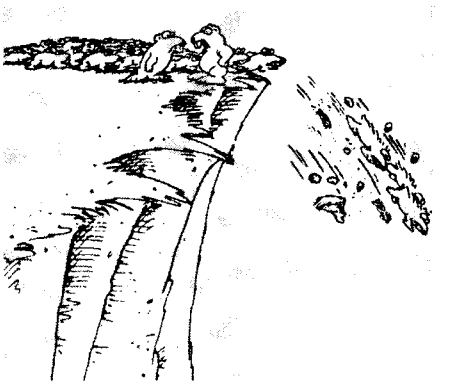
The object of the author in the following pages has been to collect the most remarkable instances of those moral epidemics which have been excited, sometimes by one cause and sometimes by another, and to show how easily the masses have been led astray, and how imitative and gregarious men are, even in their infatuations and crimes.

But is there any reason why a moral epidemic—this concerted movement of midges—couldn't be a "good" epidemic, or a "good" movement? Certainly Tobias in his preface suggests, perhaps inadvertently, that it could at least be neutral and not necessarily delusionary:

Suddenly, as I write this, everyone in New York and California, with the rest of the country perhaps to follow, is on roller skates. I certainly would not call this a form of madness, having just purchased two pairs myself—nor, at least as of this writing, a 'great human mass movement.' But all of a sudden there they all are—on roller skates. [A 1992 footnote notes that it is now roller *blades*.]

As we begin the New Year I think we can be heartened by certain movements and reversals in popular thought that are sound and should fill us with hope for humanity in the immediate future. There is in our immediate past a dramatic example of a "good" moral epidemic:

Anyone who watches late-night old movies is constantly reminded that only twenty years ago cigarette smoking was seen as a sophisticated and expressive habit. Actors and actresses are lighting cigarettes for each other (often accompanying the act with long and meaningful looks), gesturing with them, and snuffing them out with finality to mark the end of conversations. Today, when smokers are virtually ostracized as menaces to the general health, that incessant smoking on the screen seems archaic and almost incredible. That is probably the most visible of "good" reversals. But there are others.



"Five hundred lemmings can't be wrong."

With the passing of the Brady Bill in Congress in the waning days of last year's session, the nation may have finally acknowledged the connection between the possession of guns and widely spread violence. And President Bill Clinton's rather muted appeal in California to his friends and supporters in the media made the connection between the subjects of film and TV and teen-age violence and moral chaos. A healthy reversal may be in the making—a more positive one than the current call for toughness on crime.

To my mind a campaign being engineered by the director of the Center for Health Communication and associate dean at Harvard's School of Public Health, Jay Winsten, holds the most promise of seeding a widespread change of behavior for people living in our violent world. He calls in the "squash it" campaign. The slogan means "that it is cool to walk away from a confrontation—that differences can be resolved without violence" (Ellen Edwards in the *Washington Post*, December 8, 1993).

Winsten has a precedent for success in changing minds. It was he who made drunk-driving prevention possible with his designated-driver program launched on Martha's Vineyard in 1990. His understanding of the press and of the media made the phrase "designated driver," dropped into so many network entertainment programs, part of the popular culture. "He left no creative person unturned," Edwards quotes producer Grant Tinker. "He's the first guy to do what he did—use the media to get across a worthwhile message."

Winsten realizes that the problem of violence is much wider in scope. His campaign will include the teaching of conflict resolution to the whole community by means of forums for leaders in business and communications and curricula for the schools. But getting it on television "validates it for the kids," say Winsten. They see it then not as part of a health class but reflected in mainstream culture. He has tested his ideas and his slogan on focus groups of Boston inner-city young people. He found, for example, that "time out" was simply not anything they would say but "squash it" was.

"What we learned from our friends on Madison Avenue is if you want to work effectively through the mass media you need a very simple message....I'm hoping we can work with network television, that we can work with cable television, that we can work with rap groups, that we can work with sports stars. These kids, a lot of them, these inner-city kids, they watch all the black shows especially on Fox, 'Martin,' 'In Living Color,' etc. The girls seem to watch 'Melrose Place.' They watch 'Fresh Prince' on NBC....They listen to a lot of rap music and they say that they are glued to sports, so if you can get messages on sports programming you're reaching these kids, especially if you involve sports celebrities in a very powerful way."

If a little thing like a tulip bulb could drive a country mad, can not a small slogan like "squash it" drive a country sane? □

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THE GRAYMOOR PRIZE WINNERS

THE ECUMENICAL TASK: 1994

YACOB TESFAI

THE COMING OF THE THIRD WORLD

The ecumenical movement is traversing one of the most difficult periods of its history. True, talk of crisis is not new in the movement. At certain points in the past it has been shaken by events that seemed to render it vulnerable. One has only to think for a moment to realize that major events of "secular" history in our century have inevitably affected the ecumenical vision: the two world wars, the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, continuing strife over the land held sacred by Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Cultural changes like the rise of the women's movement have engendered differing responses—and, therefore, conflict—between faith communities and within them. Theological controversies—especially, perhaps, those attending the Second Vatican Council—have produced many points of friction.

The present crisis is different; it is both more nuanced than was previously the case and, in the view of many, more intense. Various writers speak of "an ecumenical winter," a "paralyzed ecumenism," even of "the end of ecumenism." However accurate or otherwise these readings may prove, it is clear that the many focal points that guided the ecumenical movement in the past and gave it a vision of the future no longer seem adequate. There is talk of a "paradigm shift," a new understanding which transcends former models and renders them inapplicable.

It is the thesis of this essay that one of the chief causes, if not *the* cause of the current crisis is "the coming of the third world" into the ecumenical encounter. I will contend that ever since the fifties, when the third world became not just the passive recipient of ecumenical efforts but an active participant, urging new ideas and new emphases, it has been both a stimulus, a "shot in the arm," and a provocation to ecumenical progress. This development has been most visible within and among the communions represented in the World Council of Churches (WCC), which will be the principal focus here. But the same phenomena can be seen within Roman Catholicism.

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BRIAN O'ROURKE

CHRISTIANS VS. LIONS

We can't go on like this. For the past hour we have been bumping along in and out of potholes as the twelve-year-old Landrover makes its way along the grassy plain and out of the Rift Valley. For the last thirty minutes, every time I turn to the left, I can feel the tire rubbing against the mudguard. Now it is worse, hitting even when I go straight. Eventually we come to a stop. With all the jolting, the center-bolt of the spring has broken.

The setting is magnificent. To our left, beyond the Rift, are the mountains, Gelai and Kitumbeine. Then comes the conical dormant volcano, Oldonyo Lengai (the Mountain of God). Further up is the massif of the Ngorongoro Highlands. On our right, a range of mountains stretches all the way beyond Lake Natron, which is sixty kilometers (thirty-five-miles) long. We are on the open grassland, on the edge of the Serengeti, in Tanzania. (Real missionaries don't go into the Serengeti. There are no people there, only wild animals and tourists.) But I am in no mood to appreciate this land of wide horizons.

We are on our way back from Malambo, where we held a seminar for students of the Extension Seminary, all Masai. Five are now with me, both Catholic catechists and Lutheran evangelists. We are sixty-five kilometers from the nearest service station, on the rim of the Ngorongoro crater. Little traffic passes this way, just a few herd boys with their animals grazing in Edenic cohabitation with wildebeest, zebra, and gazelle. But the evening is drawing on, and this is lion country.

We pile out of the car. There is no difference between Catholic and Lutheran. I am reminded of my Dutch confreres back in the sixties who assured me that during World War II the difference between Catholic and Protestant didn't count. What mattered was how they coped with the German occupation. We put a board on the soft sand to jack up the Landrover and take a look at the spring. One catechist gets under and tightens two nuts. Another hammers the spring leaves back into place. As an unreconstructed post-Tridentine Roman Catholic, I take

(Continued on page 14)

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no chances. I always carry a full complement of tools for such an emergency. Next month this safari will be the concern of my Lutheran colleague, Pastor Nathaniel Ngobei. His Toyota Hilux is a real Lutheran car. It carries no tools, and runs on faith, not good works.

Safari work here is a matter of either/or. If you keep to the track—tire marks in the grass—you can get stuck in the dry dust and sand just as easily as in thick mud. Even with four-wheel-drive there is no traction. But if you go off the track to avoid getting stuck, you get tire punctures from thorns. Once stuck, everyone—it doesn't matter if you are Catholic or Lutheran—gets out of the car and everyone pushes. (Once, just as we were going into a bad spot where we had been stuck four months earlier, one of the Masai cried out, "*Simba*!" There, sticking above the grass, were two pairs of lions' ears. Such shared experiences lead to a real bonding process, the stuff of stories for years to come.)

The course we are all part of takes three years, and because Catholics and Lutherans have studied together, when they return to their villages, they tend to maintain their good relationships. In general, it is the expatriate missionaries who are most in favor of this joint ecumenical program for the formation of church workers. Certainly the local Catholic diocesan bishop and clergy are less than enthusiastic. The attitude of one bishop nearby is instructive. He insists that the Catholic faithful hold fast to the traditions of the nineteenth-century missionaries.

After an hour's work on the Landrover, we get five centimeters leeway for the tire and limp along. We get home to tell the tale.

For Protestants, self-righteousness is the capital sin. I try very hard to be humble but I don't get very far. I must confess openly to a certain smug, patronizing attitude toward the separated sisters and brothers. After all, we Catholics claim we have been around for 2,000 years. The Reformation in Germany and England led to the emptying of the monasteries. Yet here we religious are still on the ground after 500 years, a force to be reckoned with, and a power on which the hierarchy can rely. I agree that Protestants give witness to gospel values that have been minimized or neglected by Catholics. But even here the sixteenth-century Reformers didn't have the last word, as can be seen by later qualifications by Lutheran Pietists and Wesley's Arminianism. But does all this entail the structural division of the church, for which both sides are to blame? Differences of theology are not always differences of faith. Are we not big enough to welcome the former in the *una, sancta*...?

One day the three of us staff members for the joint program were sitting around a coffee table when Sister Angelika, a Lutheran nurse, came in. She works with a mobile eye clinic in South Masailand. Blonde and wearing jeans and no veil, she is the daughter of a Lutheran pastor. In her two-story house in Ngasumet there is no ladder or stairway; she uses a fire pole to get to her bedroom. Immediately, she put me on the spot, excruciatingly so. While my two companions maintained an embarrassed silence, she asked how I coped living with and working with Lutherans. Such collaboration, she said, would be unheard of back in Germany. I told her it was no problem at all, and here's why.

It's not as if I haven't tried to make things difficult. I spent a year in Chicago studying Reformation history and the Lutheran Confessions, both at the Lutheran School of Theology and at the Catholic Theological Union. I went with an open mind, at least consciously. But after two weeks I was convinced that Martin Luther had gone astray. It was his "freedom of a Christian" that put me off. His distinction between the outer and inner man [*sic*] I found unacceptable. It smacked more of Greek dualism than of biblical anthropology. Dietrich Bonhoeffer would agree with me. Then the comparison of works to the fruit of a tree is a false analogy: the good or bad tree comes before good or bad fruit. But a human is not a plant. Rather, *faber fit fabricando*: we learn by doing. Or, metaphysically, a being perfects itself by its operations.

Then, I cannot accept, *pace* John Reumann (see *The Supper of the Lord*, Fortress), that "justification by faith" is the primary image or analogy of our relationship to God and Christ. It was only one of Paul's ten metaphors. Besides, being declared innocent in a tribunal is too legalistic a concept. Surely, the point of Jesus' parables of the lost son and the laborers in the vineyard is that our relationship to God is not based on legalism. That was the misunderstanding of the elder brother. On the other hand, I found Yves Congar's *Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église (True and False Reform in the Church)* too dismissive of a Protestant straw man. We can caricature our opponents to avoid being challenged by them.

But in Chicago they taught me nothing about motor mechanics. I did discover how the Lutheran seminarians avoided all controversy in class. They will have to be accepted as pastors by their communities and so avoid all notoriety as seminarians. The Catholic seminarians, in contrast, throve on controversy. Most were professed religious and so enjoyed a certain security. We Catholic pastors are assigned by our bishop and so can fearlessly (that is, with near impunity) confront our communities with the gospel and its demands.

Even back in Tanzania, my Lutheran colleagues are excessively polite. Whenever I embark on some controversial point in faith or theology, they take evasive action. I enjoy a good fight. It is one way of discovering one's limitations. (When I had to explain devotion to the Sacred Heart—that Jesus as a human needs other humans to share his enthusiasms and griefs—I was met with blank stares. That was when I accused my colleagues of being Monophysites. It's become part of our joking relationship.) But the only one really willing to lock

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horns with me in interdenominational combat is Aino, an ordained pastor who is the wife of my Lutheran co-worker, Pastor Yrjo Rossi.

Comparisons are odious. Still, witness is a gospel value. From the point of view of availability to students, I have become convinced of the value of celibacy. Poverty, too. When we Catholic missionaries are transferred, all we take is our toothbrush!

Ecumenism on the Masai Steppe is not all wine and roses. The first time our students came together at Oldonyo Sambu for the four-week residential sessions, there were fisticuffs in the dormitories. But over time these problems solve themselves. Then there was the scandal of 3,000 Masai who were baptized Lutherans at Soit Sambu in the past year. Half of them had already been baptized as Catholics. *Pace* Vincent Donovan, the author of *Christianity Rediscovered* (Orbis), evangelization is not enough. Nurture and pastoral care are also called for, and these Catholics had not been looked after. We Catholics depend on a highly educated male celibate clergy, who are necessarily thin on the ground. The Lutherans emphasize lay leadership in small communities, and train for it. This is where they score. In Malambo, it was Catholic missionaries who built the primary school and the first dispensary. Now there is no visible sign of Catholic presence, while the Lutherans are building their third church on the same site.

When I challenged my Lutheran colleagues on the rebaptisms at Soit Sambu, I was first told that the Catholics had been baptized with milk. (Water for the Masai, it is true, has none of the significance of milk.) I investigated, but they had all been baptized with water at a running stream. Then I was told that they had not been baptized with the trinitarian formula but in the name of *Engai* (God). I checked again, and this also was not true. Then there have been incidents where Lutherans have disturbed our liturgies, claiming that we Catholics have not yet heard the gospel. At the Extension Seminary, when it is the Catholics' turn to conduct the Service of the Word at morning prayer, the Lutherans complain that they are too short-winded. But we also do enjoy joint services together, especially on Good Friday. So our ecumenical safari continues to be bumpy, with occasional breakdowns.

The ecumenical course at the Extension Seminary lasts three years. There is one year each on the Bible, church history, and theology. There are three elements to the course: (1) home study with written exercises; (2) weekly or monthly meetings held at six or seven centers throughout the diocese, such as Malambo, where homework is discussed; and (3) two month-long residential sessions each year with a stress on lecture-style teaching. While there are only three permanent staff members, we are assisted by other teachers from both churches during the residential sessions. The students, mostly males, are mature individuals with a primary-school education. They have given proof of leadership charisms in their communities. About two-thirds are Lutheran, the rest Catholic.

The course, which was conceived in 1974, has had a decidedly Lutheran slant. That should be no surprise: initially, no Catholic was willing to join the staff. I arrived five years ago and my two colleagues agreed that we redress the balance somewhat.

First, the Bible course. At the beginning I was embarrassed by the abysmal ignorance of the Catholic students. In contrast to the Lutherans who grow up with an easy familiarity around the family Bible, the Catholic students didn't even know the setup of the Bible, where to find what. But they learned.

Lutherans accept the Bible as a given. But, I challenge them, how do we know this is the Word of God? Because, I answer, the church says so. In the history course we examine how the church determined the canon of Scripture. The Bible is the book of the community. We cannot divorce the two. Lutherans are continually being harassed here by fundamentalists, the *Walokole* (saved). This is because the basis of each group's faith is the same, the Bible. Catholics are not book-centered but people-centered. (If a fundamentalist approaches a Catholic, the latter responds that he or she "will ask Father"!) Catholics believe Jesus committed his mandate to a community but didn't tell them to read a book.

Then there is Bible and Tradition. But the Bible is a collection of oral traditions. I agree with Congar that the Bible and Tradition mutually judge and challenge one another. As for the canon of Scripture, Catholics recognize the forty-six books of the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint; Protestants recognize the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible. The Reformers thought that the Hebrew was closer to the Word of God. But they did not enjoy the fruit of modern biblical scholarship. The writers of the New Testament had quoted from the Greek Bible.

I myself teach the introduction to both the Old and New Testaments, and Proverbs, with its catholic (small "c") openness to "pagan" wisdom. I also insist on teaching Romans. (I tell my colleagues I want the students to learn what Paul said, not what Martin Luther said!)

In the second year we study the history of Christianity, that great relativisor of dogma, when seen in context. (This is true for morality as well. The Council of Trent condemned polygamy but knew nothing of the institutional polygamy of African societies.) The early heresies are important for us to understand, since the truths of our Christian profession of faith surpass our limited understanding. There are mysteries and paradoxes. God is One and Three. Christ is God and human. There are both faith and good works. To safeguard our faith we must hold on to both poles and maintain the tension between apparent contradictions. If we stress but one pole and minimize or neglect the other, we are heretics.

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Pastor Ngobei's course on Martin Luther is highly popular. I teach Trent. When it comes to institution versus charisma, it's hardly a level playing field. But I hang in there: charisms are eventually institutionalized. The Catholic church claims to be guided till the end of time by the Holy Spirit. Hence indefectibility and infallibility. But then how could we have gotten it so wrong in so many ways? Because of a misinterpretation of Romans 5:12 we believe that we were born with Original Sin before committing personal sins. Augustine was the first to think that one up. The early Christians had no such belief. For them, baptism was the visible sign of entry into the community of believers. But, if we reject Augustine, does it follow that we were conceived immaculate?

I also teach Vatican II: To what extent does it answer the demands of the Reformers? It is clear from my discussions with Catholic catechists that Vatican II has not yet been understood or theologically "received" by the clergy and the faithful in this part of Africa. Preparations for the so-called Roman synod "for" Africa, later this year, make this lacuna even more obvious.

The third year is devoted to theology. Traditionally, Catholicism has been more open to the insights of non-Christian philosophies and religions. But in our course, everyone spends a lot of time examining the traditional beliefs of the main tribes of the Arusha region. For the students, this is the most attractive section. I also give classes on liturgy and the sacraments. The Lutheran students seem fascinated by the medieval teaching that the seven sacraments accompany the seven stages of life. This conforms closely with their traditional initiation rites from one stage of life to another. Yet we now know that the scholastics sometimes got it wrong: Confirmation has nothing to do with maturity but is related to baptism; and the anointing of the sick is not a preparation for death.

Have I succeeded in casting the beam from my own eye? Do I even see it? Frankly, I cannot see how Lutheranism can answer any of my felt spiritual needs. But I respect the depth of their theological thinking. And when the sun goes down behind the western hills in Malambo and night comes on swiftly with a stiff breeze from the northeast, carrying with it the smell of rain, the Lutheran faithful gather for evening prayer by a paraffin lamp outside a neighbor's mud house. Every evening at a different family's. There is Scripture reading, a homily by an evangelist, prayers, and hymns.

This is how it should be. This is how it was in the early church. Liturgy is, literally, the work of all the people. But pushed by my compulsive Tridentine conscience, I sneak out of the village in the last light of day, in order to "get in" vespers from my breviary, to which I am bound as a cleric in major orders of the Latin rite church. "On behalf of the people of God," of course, as the constitution on the divine office states. But how can one breathe "on behalf of" someone else? □

THE COMING OF THE THIRD WORLD

(Continued from page 13)

One may aptly characterize "the coming of the third world" as giving a series of shocks to the foundations of the ecumenical movement. These came at different times and with differing degrees of force. But their net effect was to destabilize the bases on which the movement was established. At each instance, they questioned certain basic assumptions of the movement and contributed significantly to its uncertainties.

1. *The ideological shock.* If one goes back to the beginnings of the ecumenical movement around the year 1910, one finds it took form, more or less inevitably, within the ideological framework that characterized the period, which coincided with the height of the colonial era. The imperial outreaches of the Western powers stretched practically throughout the globe. Given the spirit of the times, the missionary movement seemed to be the religious arm of the inexorable Western expansion, the religious component of the civilizing mission of the West. Other cultures and religions could neither compete with nor challenge this bulldozer of an entity, the Western worldview. The pioneers of the ecumenical movement breathed the air of their times and carried the hopes of the birth of a progressive world under the hegemony of Western religious, cultural, and political domination. No wonder, then, that the non-Western peoples were absent at the creation of the ecumenical movement. A few lonely voices expressed opinions from the periphery, but they did not influence the mainstream because they did not form part of it. Even as late as the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, church leaders from the non-Western world felt some strangeness in the burgeoning ecumenical movement.

The first powerful shock to this ideological worldview was delivered in the fifties by the emergence of China and its successful overthrow of Western domination. Christian missions had devoted a great deal of material resources and personnel to missionary work in China. Then, with no forewarning or foresight, the door was closed; all missionary work abruptly ended. The event was seen as a debacle and led to great soul-searching.

Along with the performance of the Communists, the anti-colonialist, anti-Western spirit symbolized and expressed by the coming together of many newly independent countries at the Bandung [Indonesia] Conference (1955), in which Communist China played a significant role, not only dealt a severe blow to the missionary enterprise of the Western churches but posed a serious challenge to the worldview that had reigned uncontested within the ecumenical movement until then. As Konrad Raiser observed: "The decisive shock....came, it must

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be said, only with the victory of the Communist revolution in China...and with the Korean War. Together with the successful liberation struggles in India and Indonesia, *these events signaled the end of the long period of Western [Christian] world domination.*" [Emphasis added.] Raiser characterizes these events as entailing a "profound crisis....in the self-understanding of the ecumenical movement" and as giving rise to "...an intense theological reflection on itself." Such a concatenation of events had shaken the ideological basis of the movement.

2. *Participatory shock.* Slowly but surely, the churches from the non-Western world begun to enter the ranks of the Western members of the ecumenical movement. Many of them became participants in the fifties. At first, they were received with enthusiasm, as was the case at the WCC Assembly in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954. At that point the newcomers were viewed as strengthening the image that the West had of itself; they were not then suspected of bringing any new questions to the established structures but were proof of the triumph of the civilizing efforts of the West. In the words of Leslie Newbigin, "The colored and colorful representatives of the Asian and African churches were hailed and photographed as trophies of our missionary success." As subsequent years would show, however, the honeymoon was not to last.

The "official" entry of the third world into the ecumenical movement may be said to have taken place at the third WCC Assembly in New Delhi (1961). It was no accident that the Assembly took place in a third-world country. It was, rather, a signal of the growing role that these churches were going to play in the ecumenical arena. According to Raiser, it was in New Delhi—the capital which symbolized the new self-awareness of the upcoming third world—that "the so-called 'younger churches' now entered the ecumenical movement as equal partners."

Third-world participation took another new turn at Geneva in 1966. Unlike any previous such meeting, the WCC's conference on "Church and Society" made Christians in the industrialized nations conscious of the needs and demands of the third world. This was followed by the WCC assembly in Uppsala in 1968. Here the organizers saw to it that large delegations from the third world took part on equal terms with their Western counterparts. It was at the Uppsala conference that the Western churches were introduced to a new ecumenical dialogue, one which challenged their customary views about how the gospel is to be related to the world. Participants at Uppsala recognized a shift from the Western basis of the movement to that of the third world.

But this increased third-world participation was not universally

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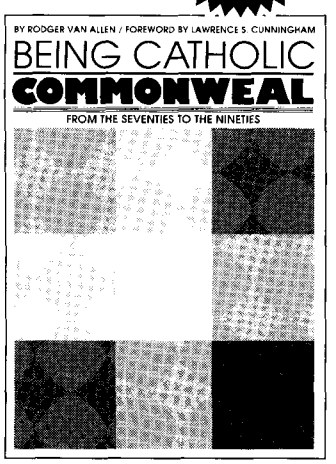

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accepted as a natural and welcome development; rather, the long-term wisdom of such a step was sharply questioned, and the ecumenical movement was strongly criticized for deviating from the goals that had been set by the pioneers. It was even accused of not being faithful to the gospel and of renouncing the one mandate of the church: to preach the gospel to the non-Christian nations. After the New Delhi and Uppsala assemblies and the Church and Society conference, critics strongly attacked the ecumenical movement for its opening to the world and for the churches' new involvement in the world's ills. These moves, made largely in response to third-world pressures, were viewed as a betrayal of the ecumenical goal. It was alleged that "politics" and "syncretism" had compromised the missionary calling of the church. The Program to Combat Racism (PCR) (see below) and the opening to dialogue with other, non-Christian faiths were attacked as having nothing to do with ecumenism.

3. *Programmatic shock.* It was after the Uppsala assembly that the racial discrimination of whites toward blacks in Africa caught the imagination of the ecumenical movement. At this assembly, the African-American writer James Baldwin had given witness to the devastation caused by such discrimination. He had expressed his fear that the Christian churches were incapable of repenting their ways: "I tremble when I wonder if there is left in the Christian civilizations (and only these civilizations can answer this question—I cannot) the moral energy, the spiritual daring, to atone, to repent, to be born again."

The WCC had of course spoken earlier against racism in many of its pronouncements. But this time around, it attacked racism head-on not only in words but through action, by giving financial aid to movements that were struggling to fight any form of racism. This aid went especially to liberation movements that were fighting against white minority rule in southern Africa. The birth of the PCR caused an immediate uproar in many circles. Some argued that by giving support to groups which were dedicated to the overthrow of racially based minority governments, the WCC was endorsing violence.

Without going into the details of the program itself, it is necessary to point out three effects of the program on the ecumenical movement. First, once again the Christian identity of the West and its civilization was called into question. In the words of Roger Williamson: "...heated discussions between the big churches of the West and the WCC have their nucleus in the threat to our identity as white, Western, well-armed nations with a specific Christian identity. The PCR could and can thus be understood as a threat to our well being, our white-ness...."

Second, much of the controversy stirred by the creation of the PCR went well beyond church circles, and the movement found itself in the eye of a considerable storm. Some critics even claimed that third-world elements had simply taken over the ecumenical movement and were using it for their own ends.

Third, the church unity aim of the movement was profoundly shaken. So-called "non-theological factors," long neglected because they were not seen as church-dividing issues, were brought to the fore, with the result that the race question came to be seen as belonging at the center of the quest for unity. As Barbara Rogers noted in her book, *Race: No Peace without Justice* [World Council of Churches, 1980], "The unity of the church is inseparably related to the unity of mankind....But our experience shows that denominationalism and racism have destroyed the unity of the church." The cumulative criticism raised questions whether the aims of the ecumenical movement had been replaced by "non-ecumenical" concerns. The shock administered by the introduction of the PCR to the goals of the movement was so serious that some even expressed the fear that it might "break the back of the ecumenical movement."

4. *Demographic shock.* Ever since the beginning of the eighties, demographers have been informing us that a quiet but radical change has been taking place in the texture of world Christianity. Roughly speaking, the West has been the seat of the Christian church for the greater part of its history. The majority of Christians were found in the Western world. The rest of the inhabited globe was then viewed as the pagan world which had to be Christianized. But this trend had begun to reverse itself in the eighties when it was realized that the numerical weight of the Christian church majority had shifted away from the West. Suddenly, Christianity was no longer "a white man's religion." Walbert Buehlmann has referred to this phenomenon as "the coming of the Third Church."

One of the characteristics of this "Third Church" has been its dynamism. At a time when the churches in the West have been greatly weakened through the forces of the Enlightenment and secularism and have been pushed to the margins, the churches in the third world are giving new life and energy to Christianity. Grassroots Christian movements, acting through what have been called "base Christian communities," have supplied much of this new vigor. One prominent element of these movements has been to combine the Christian confession with engagement in the daily struggle in the world. Economic, political, and other issues are thus viewed in the light of the faith and are not separated from "spiritual" questions.

The numerical weight of the third world in the world church was bound to have consequences. Because the change has significance beyond mere numbers, it is argued that appropriate measures to reflect the reality must be taken. Some theologians have even proposed that a new Vatican Council should be called in order to draw out the necessary implications of the shift in demographics and dynamism. One of the steps that could be taken is the election of a leadership from the third world. As Tissa Balasuriya has written, "a smooth transition to a church of the third world must be carried out with a clear foresight and spiritual insight."

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In the second place, this church is becoming the church of the poor. As the world church extends beyond the Western world, the greater part of its members are poor. In the light of this fact, the question of poverty and the implications of the gospel in its light become crucial issues. The poor Jesus Christ is discovered anew and seen in a different light. This has tremendous implications for the life and witness of this church, for it carries with it an urgent sense of responsibility for and solidarity with the poor of the non-Christian world.

5. *Theological shock.* As the "younger churches" began to emerge as full-fledged churches in their own right, they also began to develop their own theologies. They gradually came to sense that the theologies they had been taught by their "mother churches" did not take cognizance of and were not adequate to their specific situations. The Latin American theology of liberation, with its focus on "the preferential option for the poor," is an example.Consequently, a flurry of contextual theologies mushroomed in all the continents that had been the "mission fields" during the missionary era. These developments provoked serious confrontation and debate.

These new approaches gradually exerted an influence on the various sections of the ecumenical movement. Especially after the fifth assembly of the WCC in Nairobi (1975), the powerful influence of these theologies on the ecumenical movement was recognized, and, in some quarters, greeted with alarm. In view of the cold war that pitched West and East against each other, the rise of a third-world theology that advocated "God's preferential option for the poor," the serious engagement of theology with sociopolitical issues, and the prospect that liberation could become the guiding term of theology shook the theological establishments. The fear that political and social liberation might supplant church unity as the goal of ecumenism was explicitly aired, and warned against.

But the challenge of third-world theologies went further. Implicitly they begun to question the claim to universality of the so-called "classical theology" that had guided and shaped the ecumenical movement. In his book *To Set at Liberty the Oppressed* [World Council of Churches, 1975], Richard Dickinson caught the moment: "The hegemony of Western theological preoccupations has been broken. At present we have experienced the shattering of traditional formulations." Both the methods and the contents of classical theology were subjected to review and revision. As a result, there was a "paradigm shift" that perturbed the theological scene. The contexts of the theologian—sociopolitical, economic, cultural—became indispensable factors in the process of theological reflection. Third-world theologies were no longer under the tutelage of the heretofore dominant theology of the West but they were struggling to chart their own landscape. The new "theological pluralism" that developed was viewed as a threat in some circles. In this connection, the question of the limits of theological diversity became a burning issue.

6. *Cultural shock.* With the increased number of churches from the third world joining the ranks of the ecumenical movement, it was inevitable that sooner or later non-Western cultures would be at the center of the discussion. There were rumblings to this effect for a long time. Third-world theologians were claiming that their own particular cultures must be vessels for the explication of the gospel in their own contexts. It is no wonder then that Harvey Cox [*The Silencing of Leonardo Boff*, Meyer Stone, 1988] could predict that "the most vexing theological question of the late twentieth century" will be "whether a culturally polycentric Christianity is really possible." We have witnessed the birth of what Johann Baptist Metz has called the "polycentric world-church."

The full and explosive impact of these "newly arrived" cultures in the ecumenical movement seems to have been felt most clearly at the seventh WCC assembly in Canberra (1991). It was here that the issue of the capacity of non-Western cultures and religions to convey the gospel was brought to broad daylight. Issues of "syncretism" and the "authentic nature of the Christian faith" were argued in the open, some declaring that the attempt of third-world theologians to interpret the gospel in their own thought categories placed the integrity of the gospel at stake. Such critics saw looming on the horizon a new division between the churches of the North and those originally evangelized by them.

The sum total of what we have said so far is that the coming of the third world has severely shaken the ecumenical movement. Inevitably, the pressure to change the direction of ecumenical efforts resulting from the new arrivals has in turn engendered resistance, tension, and conflict. The centrality and gravity of the North-South relationship are recognized by quite a few observers of the ecumenical movement. In the words of Harvey Cox, "the growing conflict between the traditional Western (or 'Northern') church and the burgeoning Christianity

John Fandel

Sermon

It did not speak to me.
It spoke such hindsight views,
My spirit put on shoes
And hiked to Galilee.

An exile from the pews,
What would it thereby see?
A man beside the sea,
Diviner of good news.

So fact and fiction fuse
The was and is of be.

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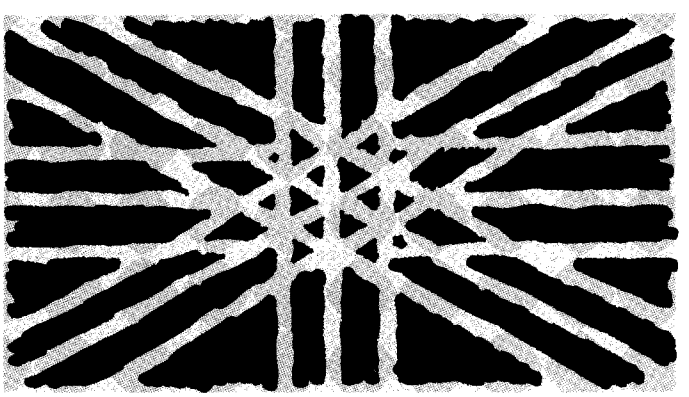
of the previously voiceless outsiders of the third world" will characterize the future of both Christianity in general and the ecumenical movement in particular.

What, then, is to be done? What are the possible scenarios for the near future? This question cannot be treated at length here. But it would be helpful and in order to list a few:

1. The first scenario sees the possibility of a growing indifference toward the ecumenical movement, a willingness to leave the movement to its fate. Some believe that this is already happening in Europe. The euphoria that greeted the fall of communism in 1989 and the triumph of capitalism and the free market have been followed by some churches turning in on themselves and seeking their own kind. The German ecumenist Hans Norbert Janowski sees "not only self-assertion but also a desperate preoccupation with oneself taking precedence over the community task of ecumenism. A new Eurocentrism has arisen which threatens to marginalize the younger churches of the Two-Thirds World not only politically but ecclesiastically as well." In this scenario, the churches will continue to give lip service to ecumenism without giving their hearts to it, and the movement will simply vegetate.

2. A second scenario is paradoxical: the ecumenical movement as we have known it may split. We have already noticed the impatience exhibited by some Western theologians and churches toward what they see as unjust pressures emanating from the third world. The various claims coming from the latter are increasingly seen as unacceptable, threatening the very "Christian faith" and "tradition" for which the West is seen as a depositor and guarantor.

Intimations of a possible split were enunciated after the Canberra assembly. For some of its observers, the spectacle offered by "strange" cultures and religions through the "uncritical inculturation" said to be promoted by some in the lands evangelized by the North constituted a threat to the integrity of the Christian faith. To such critics, it is the duty and the calling of the West to salvage or defend the faith from this drift into corruption. To counteract such a drift, the call has been launched with the idea of regrouping such forces under the Faith and Order movement, outside the WCC structure, if need be. If that should happen, it will only be an added proof of the age-old incapacity of the church to deal with its divisions.



3. The far more challenging and fruitful path to follow would be what John Deschner has called the "emerging North-South ecumenical encounter." In his varied and instructive assessments of the ecumenical goals over two decades, Deschner has focused on the question of unity as it has engaged the ecumenical movement as a whole. In his latest writings, he has observed a marked shift in emphasis, which he traces to the growing presence of the third world in the ecumenical movement that has been described here. The call, then, is to take this emerging majority into consideration and to engage with it in a critical but constructive dialogue that does not sweep under the rug the undeniable tensions and conflicts that exist. Refusal to take this path can only diminish the scope and promise of the ecumenical movement. For, as Barry Till observed twenty years ago [*The Churches Search for Unity*, Penguin, 1972]: "Unless the World Council can reform itself, streamline itself, and move significantly in the direction of a Christianity that is non-white and non-middle-class it may not survive to be the *World* Council which so far it has only been in an embryonic form."

To set about doing this, the ecumenical movement will have to dig into its ecumenical memory. What must be recovered is the insight that, more than anything else, acknowledgement of suffering and acceptance of social responsibility have been the very cement that has held the movement together. This is not the place to recall that history in detail. Suffice it to say that as soon as the ecumenical movement forgets the role of suffering in its formation and the social concerns that inspired it in the course of its maturation, it will have lost sight of important sources of its renewal.

About twenty years ago, the former WCC General Secretary, Philip Potter, wrote a still-relevant passage that will provide an appropriate summing-up of this essay:

> More recently, the immensely complex problems of social and racial injustice, of development and peace have forcibly reminded us that "ecumenical" rightly understood is about "the whole inhabited earth," the world of men, of cultures, religions, social and political structures. These are the concerns of the ecumenical movement and in a new and urgent way, they are strongly pressed by the third world.
>
> The question posed to Western churches is whether they will be humble and generous enough to participate fully with the third world in this movement in a true mutuality of giving and receiving. Certainly, this ecumenical movement is God's gift to his people whereby he draws them together in Christ as he draws them together as churches into one family, as a sign of his design to draw all men and all things together. □

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MENDING THE WORLD

A JEWISH APPROACH TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

LEONARD FEIN

There is no authoritative Jewish statement on economic justice, nothing at all analogous to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1986 pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*. Nor will there be, nor can there be. That is not because Jews do not care about economic justice; far from it. It is, instead, because we do not care for authoritative statements.

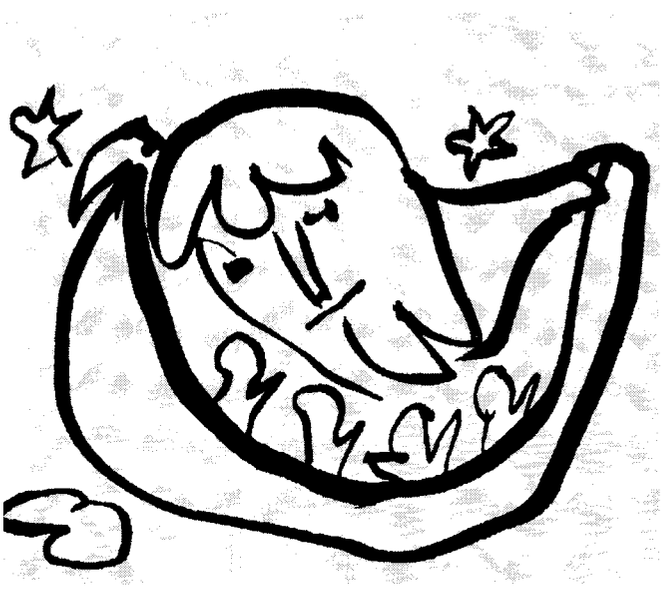
The well-known fact is that we lack the structure to promulgate such statements. By and large, we live comfortably with that fact; now and again, it is disconcerting to us. That is exactly what it has been during these past several years for that small number within the Jewish community who are aware of the bishops' pastoral, for that smaller number still who actually have read it, and for that tiny number who are aware that seven other church groups have issued studies and/or statements on the matter of economic justice.

I rather doubt that any of us would trade our anarchy for others' hierarchy, but there is no denying our envy of these fruits of that hierarchy. Would that we were capable of a systematic, thoughtful, and, above all, authoritative dogma on so pressing an issue. Would, even, that we were capable of a systematic response to the statements of others.

But to let the explanation for our apparent silence rest wholly on the structure of Jewish communal life is to say both too much and too little. The explanation lies rather deeper than that, and the nature of our silence and the reasons for it merit consideration. From a sociological or an organizational perspective, it is surely the case that the critical structural phenomenon that characterizes Jewish life is that ours is an entirely nonhierarchical community. But from a theological perspective, nothing could be further from the truth. Theologically, ours is surely the quintessential hierarchical tradition, and organizationally by far the most straightforward: There are the people, and there is God—and you can't get more hierarchical than that.

There is God, and there is God's law. And what that means is that when it comes to economic justice or to any other kind of justice, the first thing to understand about the Jews is that classical Judaism has no distinctive tradition nor any need of ethical teaching. Ethics are subsumed under law. Even the prophets, when they called the people to justice, were calling the people to obedience rather than to conscience. Indeed, until modern times, there was no word in the Hebrew language for "conscience." For that matter, the word for "law" in its classical sense is "*halachah*," which translates as "way of life," and accurately captures the ancient understanding that everything that is required of us has been commanded us by God. So, for example, Judaism has no "preferential option for the poor"; we have, instead, commandments that govern, in minute detail, our response to poverty.

Those Jews for whom the commandments are still the unbent and unbroken truth are today few in number. But for the vast majority of us, the advent of the Enlightenment two hundred years ago radically transformed our relationship to the Giver of those laws, to the Commander of those commandments, hence transformed also our relationship to the laws and commandments themselves. The word *mitzvah*, originally



LEONARD FEIN *is the author of* Where Are We? The Inner Life of America's Jews *(Harper & Row, 1988), among other books. He lives in Boston.*

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understood as commandment, has now come to be understood in a very different way; *mitzvah* these days, to the vast majority of Jews to whom it means anything at all, means a "good deed." Moses is thereby transformed into a kind of Baden-Powell, the stiff-necked People of the Book become good scouts.

That represents a radical break from the classical view. Classical Judaism was never intended as an appeal to the individual conscience; it was a doctrine for collective behavior. Yet for two centuries now, that doctrine has been fighting a losing battle with the claims of individual citizenship and with Western culture's celebration of individual autonomy. In an earlier time, each community had a *beth din*, literally a court of law, which handled the case law of the Jews by reference to the common law of the Jews, the Torah, and its authoritative interpretations. In the United States today, however, the *beth din*—a structure that still exists—has almost everywhere been reduced to the utterly routine confirmation of divorce and to the issuance to restaurants and caterers of certificates of compliance with dietary laws. Each congregation of Jews is entirely autonomous, so the congregational pulpit has replaced the communal *beth din*. But the pulpit rabbi is hardly viewed as a figure of authority—or, in more precise keeping with the modern view, he or she is viewed as a figure of religious authority only so long as religion is understood as a compartment of our lives rather than as a way of life. The Ten Commandments have been reduced to the ten suggestions.

So, the classical understanding, save for a small number of us, is no longer available. It is no longer to the community's law we must look if we seek to know what Jews believe, but to the individual's conscience.

The conscience of the Jews: There are any number of individual Jews and Jewish organizations that engage, more or less actively, in the pursuit of economic justice. But it should surprise no one that the Jewish community's attention is these days distracted by other commitments and other issues. The easy explanation for this seeming indifference is that we have become too comfortable, that the sweet smell of our success acts as a kind of chloroform to our righteous indignation. But that is a superficial, a mistaken explanation; the real explanation lies elsewhere.

The Jewish people has always lived where particularism and universalism intersect. We are the tribe that discovered the universal God, but chose to remain a tribe. By and large, our neighbors have failed to understand the urgency we have attached and continue to attach to the tribal boundaries. No small part of our historic quarrel with the church has issued from that lack of understanding: It is as if the church had said to us, "Now that you have discovered the universal God, why not become God's universal people?" only to have us respond, "Thanks for the invitation; you can have our God, but you can't have us. We are a people apart."

But it is difficult in the extreme to figure out how to be, or to want to be, simultaneously, apart from and a part of the larger society. The intersection where we have sought and seek to stand is not a steady place with a sure footing. We acknowledge that if we are not for ourselves, no one will be for us, and that if we are only for ourselves, we are nothing, but the working out of those twin perceptions in the real world is no easy matter.

Although neither of Hillel's famous questions can stand by itself, there was, in rough historical terms, a division of labor in responding to them. The priests, and then the rabbis, were principally concerned with the first question "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"—hence with the work of self-preservation, with Jewish interests, with social stability, with the binding up of Jewish wounds, with Jewish particularism. The prophets *as we have come to understand them* took the second question —"If I am only for myself, what am I?"—as the more urgent: Their concern was with Jewish universalism, with Jewish values, with social justice. The rabbis taught that there can be no justice without stability, and they were right; the prophets taught that there can be no stability without justice, and they, too, were right. One can usefully study Jewish history as the story of the tensions between the two rights, the tension and the competition. Pendulum-like, we have swung now in this direction, now in that; the midpoint where we are meant to live our lives has been a hard place to stand, to keep our bal-

Dixie Partridge

Earthly Effects

Again the birch trees practice dying,
their emptied limbs paler than the winter dark.
My daughter, returned to college,
has left a jar of Ovaltine—like an amber memory
from another house far from here,
where boots stomp in from the barn,
the radio atop the Frigidaire statics on,
hot milk pours to the cup, and the malted scent
yearns through the night farmhouse.

It's good for you, says her note,
and my movement and thought are let loose
from the clock, shadows on the floor
turn straight-backed and spare.
Windows narrow, web over with lace.
Lamplight goes on ripening the bated space
between objects, as though endings
are written with beginnings,
blonde daughters the dark mothers we bore.

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ance; the pendulum is not easily calibrated.

Alas, in our time, the dominant swing has been in the direction of particularism, toward interests and away from values, toward stability and away from justice. (And, given the galloping disorder of our times, that swing will likely accelerate in the years just ahead.) Those Jews (and there have been and are still many of them) who have taken justice as their mission have been, in general—I need to emphasize that there are many exceptions, but the general rule holds—those whose ties to the Jewish community have been most attenuated. Organizationally and institutionally, many—again, not all, by any means, but many—of the agencies of the community have been preoccupied, perhaps even obsessed, with the issue of Jewish survival. This should come as no surprise. The specific torment that is the legacy of this bloody century is profoundly disabling; we are a people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We are a battered people, a people that has taken as its slogan, really as its oath, two words: Never again.

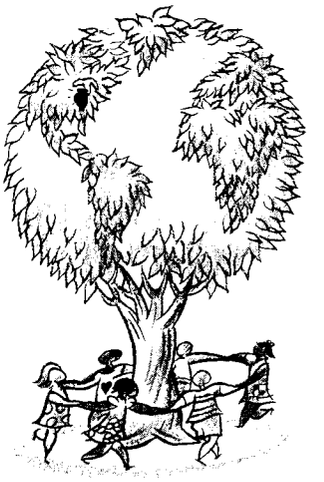
I can readily understand that others may be impatient with our tendency to wrap ourselves in the shroud of the Holocaust, to seek on medical grounds to be excused from the work of redemption. It is now nearly half a century since the Kingdom of Night came to an end. How long will our alibi, however authentic it was for a decade or two, remain valid?

Yet for all my own preference for and commitment to a more expansive view of what Jews ought to be caring about and doing, for all my commitment to *tikkun olam*, to mending the world, as the most energizing and compelling of the themes of Jewish life and literature, I understand our contemporary confusions. It is not just that the enormity of the event we recall is so devastating. It is, as well, that in the years that have intervened, our healing wounds have time and again been rubbed raw. There have been among my own people those who have sought to rip off the scabs and refresh the wounds for their own political or ideological purposes. And there have been those, outside the Jewish community, who continue to pick at those scabs.

In Budapest, forty-eight years ago, two men encountered each other. One was Adolph Eichmann, the chief technician of the Final Solution. The other was Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat whose courage and decency led him to save more than 10,000 Jews—some say as many as 100,000—who would otherwise have been slaughtered. As a teacher, how can I help my people understand that in addition to saying "no" to Eichmann, we have to learn to say "yes" to Wallenberg? How can we be certain which of these two men will ultimately prove the victor? How can Jews be confident that the future lies with Wallenberg, given the continuing evidence that Eichmann is not over?

These are difficult questions, but not unanswerable questions. "Never again" is, after all, an insufficient slogan; it tells us what to avoid, but does not tell us what to embrace. And if we are today more concerned with resistance than with redemption, that is, God-willing, a phase and not a destiny. Indeed, there is evidence that we know that. There is evidence of a new stirring, a resumption of the work of mending, and it is to a tiny example, just a piece, of that evidence that I want now to turn.

Healing the Past . . .
CREATING THE FUTURE



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In October 1986, a new Jewish organization came into being. Called "Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger" (*mazon* means "sustenance"), it was the product of a startling statistic and a disarmingly simple idea. In the aggregate, American Jews spend many hundreds of millions of dollars each year on catered celebrations. Some of these are celebrations of *Goodbye, Columbus* proportions; most are considerably more modest. For years, rabbis have railed against excessive consumption; for years, at virtually every level of income, people have been seized by a "Can You Top This?" fever.

What would be the response if celebrants were encouraged voluntarily to add a 3 percent surcharge to the cost of such functions, thereby creating a fund with which to make war against hunger? Out of the statistic and the idea the organization, a grassroots effort, came into being. In its first year, it raised $40,000; in this, its eighth year, it approaches the $2 million mark.

What can we learn from the Mazon experience? We learn first that there are people, in substantial numbers, who continue to care. Indeed, a significant number of the contributions Mazon receives are accompanied by letters expressing the thanks

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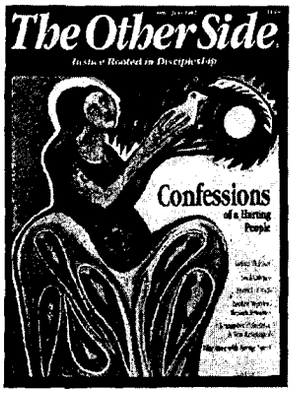

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of the donor. And we learn that very many people are accessible to the traditional appeal that our bread is to be shared with those in need. Mazon quite specifically avoids asking people to sacrifice for the sake of the poor; its appeal emphasizes, instead, that the joy of the celebrants is enhanced if their celebration includes this act of kindness toward the stranger. More specifically, Mazon makes its argument in classic language: at the Passover seder, we say, holding up the *matzah*, "This is the bread of affliction; let all who are hungry enter and eat." Citing the verse, Mazon asks whether we can expect the hungry to hear the invitation if we do not seek them out. Citing Isaiah 58—"Is this the fast I have chosen?"—Mazon, through congregational rabbis, asks that on Yom Kippur we turn toward those whose fast will not conclude at day's end, whose fast is not the holy fast of repentance but the tragic fast of utter poverty.

The language resonates, and the number of contributions grows apace. Once, we left corners of our fields to be gleaned by the poor. Once, in Eastern Europe, it was routine to invite the beggars to join in our wedding celebrations. Today, far from the fields and afraid of the beggars, a new device. Perhaps, then, things are not so bleak; apparently, people may still be moved by the language of kindness. Mazon speaks that language in the familiar formulas of a particular community; it speak to Jews in a language they understand. But its message in that particular language is radically universal.

What rescues that emphasis on particularism from becoming a narcissistic preoccupation with self-interest is the prophetic tradition. We are anchored by our language—and liberated by it. We nurture both the particular structure and the universal ideology that is the prophetic mandate as we in our time have come to interpret and understand it and accept it as our legacy. That is not to say that there are not some among us who resist, who object to the notion that this particular people has any obligation to others. Mazon comes to help refute the obsession with self, but the obsession is deeply rooted. Now and then, it reveals itself to us in the form of people who object to Mazon on the specific grounds that Jews as Jews have no business worrying about "other people's" problems.

I had, until a few years ago, been quite unsuccessful in countering such objections. Neither the words of Isaiah nor the words of Amos (nor my own more feeble words) were adequately persuasive. And then, several years ago, a woman from Wisconsin wrote Mazon a letter, which reads, "Dear Mazon: The enclosed $90 check is in memory of my brother, whose last known communication was a letter smuggled out of Buchenwald, addressed to a former neighbor of his, a Christian baker, begging for a loaf of bread because my brother was starving. It gives me immense satisfaction to do for my neighbors, wherever they are, what no one did for my brother."

I cannot claim that all the objections dissolve in the face of this eloquent statement. But I have taken to copying it and sending it to anyone who raises the question, and, once again, because it speaks in so specific and so resonant a language, it is considerably more powerful than a general appeal to universal conscience. That, it seems to me, is the first lesson of the Mazon experience. But for all my pride in Mazon, its second lesson is a lesson of limits: Mazon, after all, is an endeavor to increase *g'milut hassadim*, acts of loving kindness. It is, if you will, the Jewish equivalent of a thousand points of light. And just as a thousand points of light, though they may also be a thousand points of warmth, are not yet the fires of justice, so, too, Mazon is a very long way from *riduf tzedek*, from the pursuit of justice which is our mandate.

How, if at all, can we move from the language of kindness to the language of justice? How can we move from philanthropic sensibility to political commitment? Hunger in this country persists, after all, not because either kindness or food is lacking, but because the will to justice is lacking. How can we connect the pulpit to the public square, for it is only then that we move from the conscience of the individual to the policy of a community, then, therefore, that we move from loving kindness to justice?

Issuing statements, thereby generating debate and raising consciousness, is one beginning. Sponsoring a soup kitchen or making of participation in something like Mazon a ritual behavior is another. But, as the bishops' pastoral letter itself acknowledges, the work of justice, the more so if it is to be on a scale that warrants calling it "a new American experiment" (95), requires as its first step "the development of a new cultural consensus" (83). Over and over again, the bishops place the call for justice in the context of community. And they are quite right; it is difficult to imagine any serious move toward economic justice, however defined, save as it arises out of a sure sense of community.

The story of Mazon comes to teach how the latent sense of community can be energized, how, that is, the collective conscience of this people can be nurtured through joining Jews with other Jews in the work of repair and redemption, and how a largely affluent Jewish community can be joined to the communities of largely non-Jewish poor people in an extended family of humankind. For the community of Jews, this gentle reaching out is a new beginning, a tentative reaching out to our neighbors, wherever they are, a way of again recalibrating the pendulum, of restoring the creative tension between self and other, of renewing the journey from kindness to justice.

And I dare say that for those of us who believe, as I do, that the narrow self-interest of the Jews points plainly to the assiduous pursuit of the values of the Jews, the statements of our neighbors are, finally, a source not only of envy but also of strength and energy and inspiration, just as, so I would like to think, the ongoing work of any number of Jewish groups—never enough, but truly more than I can count—becomes in itself a statement to energize and inspire others. Mending this, God's fractured world, is the collective calling of all the faith communities, each with its own particular vocabulary, all seeking together the grammar of justice. □

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A WORD OF DISSENT

THIS 'PIANO' IS OUT OF TUNE

The Piano, written and directed by Jane Campion, has been touted as the art house masterpiece of early winter. It certainly displays all the makings of such: an intriguing story, gifted actors in the leads, handsome photography, clever narrative devices, intimations of the depths of human nature. All this and most of the top prizes at the Cannes Film Festival. Who could ask for anything more?

I could. *The Piano*, far from being a masterpiece, isn't even a good movie. It suffers from something that is lethal to dramatists and film directors: a basic lack of curiosity about what makes human beings tick.

No such incuriosity vitiated Ms. Campion's previous film, *An Angel at My Table*, which was very good indeed. But the heroine of *Angel*'s factually based story, Janet Frame, was an accomplished writer who provided the director with an insightful autobiography which the director and her co-scenarist, Laura Jones, ably adapted. *The Piano* is Campion's own original script and, writing on her own, she doesn't probe. Furthermore, the superficiality of Campion the writer elicits a corresponding carelessness in Campion the greatly gifted director.

An Angel at My Table shows how an eccentric, extremely shy person can find her niche in the world while continuing to hold conventional society at a distance. *The Piano* proceeds in the opposite direction: the psychologically and socially withdrawn heroine finally makes peace with common humanity through the liberation of sexual love.

That heroine, Ada, is a middle-class Scotswoman of about thirty who comes to nineteenth-century New Zealand as a mail-order bride. There are three peculiar things about Ada: she has an illegitimate daughter; she is voluntarily mute; and, though her relationship with her daughter is affectionate enough, she makes essential contact only with her piano, on which she plays anachronistically dreamy, Keith Jarrett-style music. When Ada ships off to New Zealand, she takes her daughter, her piano, and her silence with her.

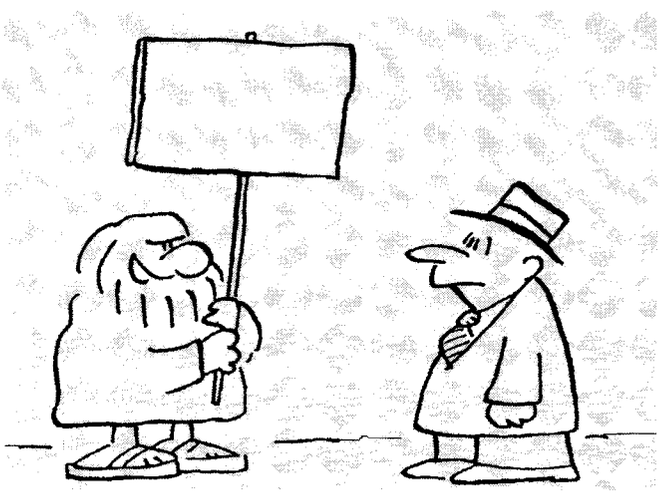
What do we learn about Ada's inner life from her oddities?

Did Ada choose silence at an early age because of traumatic experience? aversion to her family? a mystical feeling of detachment? Under the opening shots, we hear Ada's inner voice on the soundtrack flippantly remarking that she doesn't understand her muteness. No puzzlement on her part, not even curiosity. By this the director warns us that she isn't going to fall back on glib psychiatric or sociological explanations. Bravo! But what does she supply instead? Nothing. Even that inner voice (and how clever of Campion to make it a child's!) is stilled once the story is underway and isn't heard again until the end of the movie. What a wonderful counterpoint might have been achieved by having this voice express Ada's still childish, impish self while Holly Hunter's face and figure present the heroine's dour adult exterior. But, as is, the heroine's silence comes across only as an overstatement of her detachment. Let the reader who has already seen the movie think back: which scene would have been essentially altered by having Ada speak aloud rather than through sign language and scribbled notes? I can think of only one: near the end, Ada's jealous husband spares her lover's life upon learning that he too has never heard Ada's voice. But this tells us more about the husband than about Ada. Generally, that silence is dramatic garnish, not substance.

Worse still is the lack of information about the relationship that produced the illegitimate daughter. Ada's feelings about sex are crucial to the dramatic development of *The Piano*, for her progress toward sexual fulfillment is the central action of the movie. In order to measure her inner journey, we must know from where she is starting. Who was her first lover? We never find out. Was she in pursuit of sexual fulfillment or merely curious or desirous of a child or rebelling against her parents or was she raped? Campion gives nary a hint. This isn't fruitful ambiguity but dramatic blankness.

So far I have been complaining about the way Campion has set up the background of her story. What about the foreground, the ongoing action? In New Zealand, Ada falls into an uneasy and nonsexual domesticity with her husband, Stewart, a starchy but not entirely unlikable man. He gradually comes to love her (and to feel some affection for the little girl), but Ada doesn't respond. For land, Stewart sells the piano, a violation of his wife's inner being. She accepts a bargain from the purchaser, an illiterate roughneck named Baines, whose attraction to Ada becomes an obsession. They agree that the number of visits she pays to his house (ostensibly to teach him to play) will match the number of black keys on the instrument. But, during subsequent visits, Ada barters crypto-sexual favors for clusters of keys. Baines asks that she raise her skirt while she plays and that costs him five keys, the removal of her outer garments costs ten, and so forth.

A clever dramatic device but how does Campion develop



"Wouldn't you *like to know!"*

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it? Obviously, Ada is going to catch fire so we have to be gripped by the process, not the outcome. To show convincingly how Ada's scornful bargaining gradually turns into real desire, Campion would have had to elicit from her actress the tiniest shifts of facial expression, a virtual ballet of eye contact between her and Baines, aborted smiles, unmaintainable frowns. Instead, Campion has turned the usually irrepressible Holly Hunter into something monochromatically dour, even forbidding—a white mask of ungracious chastity. That's a fine image to start from, but the actress doesn't alter it significantly as the sex duel proceeds. By the time our heroine rushes into Baines's arms, she seems guided more by the dictates of plot than by passion. This is what I meant when I complained of *The Piano*'s basic lack of curiosity. Campion here coasts on the oddity of her situations. She doesn't explore them.

Campion has misfired with her male actors, too. As Baines, Harvey Keitel is supposed to be a blend of sensitivity and brutishness. He gets only the brutishness right. And, unable to do a convincing New Zealand accent, he falls back on that old acting standby, The Accent from Another Galaxy. Sam Neill, superb as the coldblooded lead in the Brit TV series "Reilly, Ace of Spies," and even better as Meryl Streep's warmhearted husband in *A Cry in the Dark*, plays the husband. For the most part he flails about, searching for some connection between his own romantic temperament and the unromantic stuffiness of the character as written. In the final scenes, Neill does succeed in making Stewart's torment moving, but this very success creates an imbalance since we are meant to sympathize with both men equally. Because of Neill's pathos and Keitel's inexpressiveness, we tilt too far toward the husband.

The child actress Anna Paquin fully responds to Campion's direction, making the daughter a sprite reminiscent of Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter.*

And certain other elements in this movie are undeniably well done: the natural way the Maori natives drift along the periphery of the action, enriching the atmosphere and the film's sense of history without dissipating the central situation; the evocation of the marshland locale in all its clamminess and squishiness; offhandedly piercing moments such as the one when Neill, spying through a window at the lovemaking of the adulterous couple, is suddenly jolted when his dog trots to his side and licks his hand. And, for the climax of the movie, Campion has contrived a dreamily powerful, Lawrentian sequence in which Ada's piano nearly destroys its owner when she tries to renounce it. (And, indeed, D.H. Lawrence seems to be the dominant influence on this movie.)

I suspect that Campion wrote her script by trying to link the various haunting images that came to her while dreaming or daydreaming. She's a true poet by starts and fits. There are sights in *The Piano* that wow us but few of them guide us into the hearts of her characters, and they certainly don't add up to the satisfying Gothic love story that Campion has declared she was trying to make. As I've noted, this director needs a writer.

Which allows me to conclude on a hopeful note. Jane Campion's next movie is her adaptation of *The Portrait of a Lady*.

RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

ART IS DANGEROUS

'BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD,' FOR EXAMPLE

Having established a reputation as an antinomian nihilist pornographer (sounds like a "Geraldo" guest) with my defense of "NYPD Blue," I now proceed, with some trepidation but a still-unshaken faith in reasoned dialogue, to talk about the "Beavis and Butthead" phenomenon.

You've all heard about the show, of course, though I doubt that many of you have watched it. (I could be wrong here, but I just don't see the average *Commonweal* subscriber spending a lot of time with MTV.) *Newsweek* and *Time* have both given big spreads to "B&B" as the salient example of the dumbing-down of the American consciousness. A recent *New Yorker*—which, even under the editorship of Tina Brown, still runs an occasional good cartoon—features two grunge-chic teens strolling along, one saying to the other, "You know, I guess 'Beavis and Butthead' is the 'Ren and Stimpy' of our generation." (Never mind—I'll explain "Ren and Stimpy" in a while.) And "B&B" has featured prominently in the congressional hearings on TV violence—again, with most of the senators not having *seen* the show—and also looms behind Attorney General Janet Reno's portentous rumblings that, if the networks can't clean up their own act, sex-and-violence-wise, then the Feds may have to take a hand. In fact, the show has achieved the kind of "fame" peculiar to our information-bulimic era: something about which everyone has an opinion, even and especially those who've never experienced the thing itself.

The reason—the awful reason—for this notoriety is that, a few months ago, an unsupervised five-year-old decided to play with matches and started a fire that killed his infant sister, and that the mother claims that the boy started the fire because he had been watching "Beavis and Butthead" (Beavis is an inchoate pyromaniac, who often giggles, while watching rock videos, "Heh heh—fire's cool!").

Rarely has there occurred so urgent an instance of TV's possible deleterious effect on the young. Condemnatory letters flooded in to newspapers. Newscasters with grave faces discussed the tragedy and the charges. MTV itself moved the show to a later hour and now, before every installment of "B&B," runs the following disclaimer: "Beavis and Butthead are not role models. They're not even human. They're cartoons. Some of the things they do would cause a real person to get hurt, expelled, possibly deported. To put it another way: don't try this at home."

Very commendable, not to say politic, of MTV, I'm sure. And very off the point. I leave aside (though I do not forget) the fact that five-year-olds should *not* be unsupervised, and that kids (I am the veteran of three, two natch and one step) are fas-

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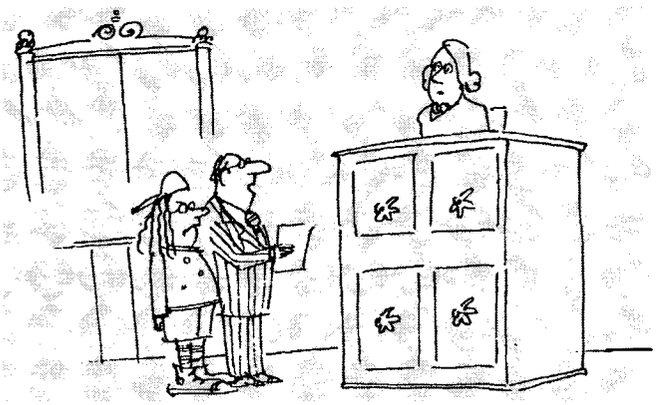
cinated with fire even *without* the Tube telling them to be so. "Beavis and Butthead" is a not-bad but not-seismically-important bit of product that, because of an alleged concatenation of terrible events (a kid left alone, a TV set, a book of matches), can give us if we're smart an insight into the relationship between TV and behavior or, to lay down all my cards, art and reality. And first, you have to understand the show.

Beavis and Butthead are cretins. Ugly, glue-sniffing, and barely articulate students at "Highland High" (every pun, *natürlich*, intended), they spend their days devising inane and foredoomed schemes to get either money (which they're too dumb to know what to do with) or girls (which ditto). When they're not doing that, they're sitting on a sofa watching the worst of MTV heavy-metal videos (egad, Holmes—could this be authorial self-consciousness?) and making mindless comments thereupon, punctuated by their signature, nanocephalic "huh-huh-huh" gigglesnort laugh. Beavis is the blonde one in the "Metallica" T-shirt, with the lobotomized Jack Nicholson smile. Butthead, the dominant, is the brunette in the "AC/DC" shirt whose braces make his face a nightmare of exposed gums.

The lads, in short, are a savage parody: of our worst fears about what MTV-watchers are or will become; of the "Generation X" which is now ascending; of that scariest of cultural inventions, the future. Blessed are the geeks, for they shall inherit the earth?

The kids who watch "B&B"—and it is very popular—are the very kids we are afraid are going to turn *into* B&B. But, upon my soul, I can't see how that could happen. "B&B" is *so* crude in its satire, *so* unrelenting in its implicit critique of the couch-potato mind-set, *so* severe in its condemnation of everything Beavis and Butthead represent, that I—in all honesty—must regard it as a moral act. If I had a kid of twelve or so, I'd much rather he watched "B&B" than, say, the softcore and softhead blandishments of "Baywatch" or "Beverly Hills 90210."

As Aristotle understood, comedy is anarchic, dangerous, offensive, and much more unrelentingly judgmental than tragedy. (I note in passing that the creator of "B&B" has the splendidly apposite name, Mike Judge.) Aristotle also observed that comedy is essentially the conflict of the *aladzon*, the boastful man, with the *eiron*, the self-effacing man, who in their tension intimate but never achieve a truly human norm.



"Your honor, my client pleads not guilty by reason of watching too much 'Beavis and Butthead.'"

And that's one of the few take-it-to-the-bank observations about the imagination ever made. It explains—strike that, it illuminates—the ongoing power of Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde—*and* Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, Martin and Lewis, Fred and Barney Flintstone; and Ren the psychotic cartoon rat and his friend Stimpy the submissive cartoon dog (*told* you I'd get there!); and our boys.

In one episode, after watching some predictably salacious videos, Butthead (the *aladzon*) gets the idea to join a nudist colony, so they can see (huh huh huh) naked chicks. Beavis (the *eiron*) trails along uncertainly. They are rejected, to be sure, but climb over the wall to the compound. And there they're greeted by a nude (not naked—it's a semantic world of difference) young woman who invites them to join the community in their day of swimming, volleyball, and all the other things you associate with a picnic of friends. And what do B. and B. do? They stay, till nightfall, transfixed against the wall, staring at people who don't think of the body as the stuff of bad jokes, unable to join them, and unable to leave. If there's a better or bitterer little essay on what's wrong—and stupid—about the pornographic imagination, I'd like to see it.

But that's a *sophisticated* approach to the show. What about all those impressionable and unsophisticated people who might watch it and take its clear negatives as positives?

And here's a hard point. It was, I think, Delmore Schwartz who said "Art, being bartender, never gets drunk." Nice, that, for the artists—but no help for the rest of us, who presumably do get snockered on the sublime.

The awful truth, known since Plato had Socrates banish poets from his Republic, is that art can—can always—be misused. ("Frank—are you calling 'Beavis and Butthead' art?" "Well, yes.") There was the little old lady who converted to Catholicism after reading the Jesuit sermons in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. There was the couple in the twenties, man and woman, who conspired to kill the lady's husband and at their Paris trial claimed they hatched their plan after reading André Gide's great novel, *The Immoralist* (Gide was shaken). There was—to stare again into the abyss of our century—the careful murder of 6 million Jews justified, in part, by a butthead misreading of Nietzsche. And I have absolutely no doubt that somebody, somewhere, has read *Madame Bovary* and decided that adultery and suicide are—huh huh huh—cool.

So what's the way out? The easy, smartass liberal solution is a dismissive wave of the hand and the observation that, well, people like *that* just shouldn't be watching the thing in the first place. The Tipper Gore remedy is the infamous Warning label: DO NOT EAT THE FRUIT OF THIS TREE. Didn't work in the Garden, doesn't work now.

The real answer, I think, is that there is no answer. Until we become—terrible thought—a theocracy, what can be imagined and uttered *will* be. And, since it will be from the imagination, it will be as dangerous as it is life-enhancing—like the moral life itself, I would argue.

And doesn't the moral life itself, maybe more than anything else, need to come with a warning label?

FRANK McCONNELL

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Reformation without Protestants

THE PHOENIX AND THE FLAME
Catalonia and the Counter Reformation
Henry Kamen
Yale University Press, $45, 527 pp.

Carl L. Bankston III

Spanish Catholicism is often pictured as changeless in its reactionary character, the faith of a rural people isolated from the spiritual and ideological currents of the rest of Europe by seas, mountains, and intolerant rulers. The linguistically and culturally distinct region of Catalonia, in this view, has shown an even greater imperviousness to innovation than other parts of the peninsula. In *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*, Henry Kamen argues, to the contrary, that the attempt to define and establish Catholic orthodoxy after the Council of Trent introduced new ideals of faith and culture in Catalonia, as well as in Castilian Spain, and that many of these ideals gradually took root in popular religion.

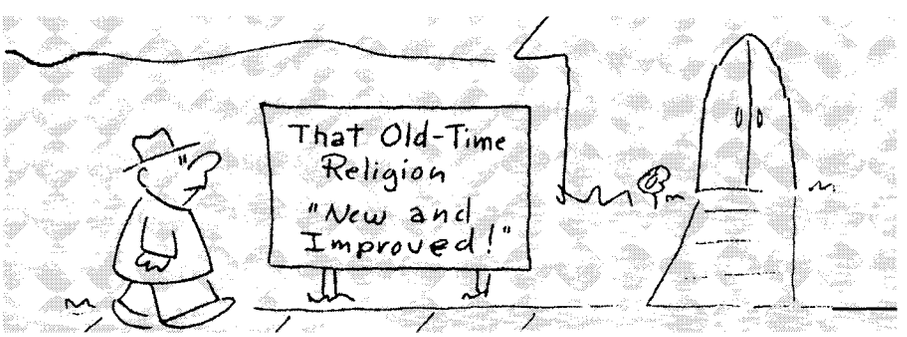
Kamen opens his discussion by focusing on the mountainous district of Mediona, an area about thirty miles from Barcelona. While the sixteenth-century Mediona of Kamen's description was Catholic, its Catholicism was marked by the informal character and concerns of a folk religion. Ritual observances and social activities were tied to the seasonal cycle of an agrarian economy. The saints, especially Saint Galderic, whose remains were held by a nearby abbey, were most often invoked as guarantors of rain. Participation in the sacraments was rare, often limited to baptism at birth and extreme unction at death, both of which were frequently administered in the home. Marriage was neither performed in churches nor sealed by the church. Because no bishop came to the area, confirmations were virtually unknown. Even attendance at Mass was irregular, because of the limited availability of priests.

The spread of Lutheran teachings, not the beliefs and practices of country people, gave rise to the Council of Trent. Still, Philip II took up the Tridentine reforms and attempted to promote them throughout his kingdom, in areas where Protestants had little influence. Philip's support for the reforms had political as well as religious significance. By establishing royal control over the reformist movement, the Spanish king could extend his control over the peninsular church, reducing foreign, especially French, intrusion. For the Catalans, however, Kamen observes, "control from within the peninsula meant control from Castile." The royal reformation was largely a Castilian program, and efforts such as the reform of the religious orders met with frequent Catalan opposition.

Resisting the imposition of outside authority, though, is not the same as being immune to outside influence. European Catholicism has always been characterized by a tension between official, universal beliefs and rites and local, informal, traditional practices. One the one hand, religion has incorporated Catholics in a community of believers that transcends regional boundaries. On the other, it has been an expression of solidarity that helps to define individuals as members of specific communities. By standardizing the rites and liturgy of Catalonia, through instruments such as the new Roman breviary of 1568 and the new Roman missal of 1569, the Counter Reformation helped to draw believers in Mediona and other isolated locales closer to the official faith. While devotion to local saints continued, and was even fostered by the development of printing, Tridentine piety brought about a remarkable growth in the importance of the cult of the Virgin Mary.

The shift from a religion based on the community to one based on participation in universally shared sacraments was never complete. The Catalan clergy continued to represent the countryside, rather than the episcopal authority flowing from above. The efforts of the reformers to control pilgrimages and festivals, and to establish a clear distinction between secular and religious time were often frustrated by the persistence of popular practices and by the rhythms of work and leisure in an agricultural economy. But the post-Tridentine innovations enabled the church to exercise greater influence over local festivities through introducing new saints, new religious orders, and by transforming profane public space to sacred use.

Of all the universalizing movements of this era, the Inquisition was perhaps



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the least successful in Catalonia. The Holy Office was too closely connected to the Castilian power structure to receive Catalan acceptance or cooperation. The inquisitors found relatively few cases of heresy, in part because few existed and in part because the natives of areas like Mediona were reluctant to betray any but the resident French to the Castilian authorities.

When the reformers were not acting as agents of Castilian hegemony, they were able to initiate far-reaching changes. Marriage and sexuality were gradually redefined, bringing both under greater church control. The art of preaching received increased attention and popularity, despite the tendency of many preachers to deliver their sermons in Castilian. Missionary work, especially by new religious orders such as the Society of Jesus, helped to spread the principles of the reformers.

Catalonia's adherence to orthodoxy did not result from its isolation from all secular influences. In a detailed study of booksellers' wares, Kamen demonstrates that a wide range of books printed elsewhere in Europe were available in Barcelona, including a number of prohibited works. While the Catalans continued to be ambivalent in their attitudes toward Castile, seceding to France in 1641 and reuniting with Spain in 1654, a universal Catholicism spread steadily, apart from secular politics.

The Phoenix and the Flame provides a richly detailed description of changes in rural Catalan religion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At times, it is a little too detailed, so that the reader becomes lost in Kamen's erudite discussions of early modern folk practices, clerical administration, and literature. While the book provides an excellent portrait of a period and a region, it overlooks some fundamental questions about historical causation. Was the gradual adoption of sacramental Catholicism in this isolated area a result of the Counter Reformation, or were both church movement and change in popular religion results of an increasing flow of communication throughout Europe? Given that the transition from old piety to new was a slow process, covering several centuries, why should the Counter Reformation be regarded as the beginning, or even as a crucial phase, of the change?

While these questions remain unanswered, Kamen has offered strong evidence against the old view of "fortress Spain" as the home of a reactionary Catholicism. He has provided insight into the evolution of popular religion in the peninsula, and he has cast light on everyday life in a too often forgotten corner of Europe. □

ACTS OLD & NEW

ACTS
Larry Woiwode
HarperSanFrancisco, $17, 244 pp.

Paul Elie

Having a favorite biblical book is like having a favorite among one's fingers or teeth: the notion seems wrongheaded and a little ridiculous, a misunderstanding of the parts and the whole and the ways they are bound up together. Yet people do have favorites, and lately I've thought that mine is Acts. I suppose I'm drawn to it for much the same reasons that Larry Woiwode suggests he is: for its mingling of narrative and doctrine, of prophecy and practicality, and for the balances its author strikes, as Dante did, between the just and the unjust and the people haltingly making their way toward their final end. The book is also especially resonant for the reader whose encounter with God has had more to do with an experience of church than with one of Jehovah or of Jesus Christ.

Lately, too, Acts has become a proof text for Christians of all sorts, whether evangelicals exhorting us to witness and testify or peace-and-justice activists who would remake church and society to match their sense of how the early Christians did things. And Anthony Burgess and Gore Vidal have based novels on it. Like those authors, Woiwode usually writes fiction. As a result, perhaps, he tries to subordinate himself to the text rather than rewrite it; with a shelf of fiction behind him, he seems to relish the chance to finally be at play in the fields of the Lord. In this discursive close reading of Acts, Woiwode means to open up the text to unschooled readers and to show its relevance for our age. More often, though, he renders Acts strange and unaccommodating, in ways that suggest just how intractable the problems of church and world are, and how surprising the solutions to them can be.

Woiwode developed the book from an essay he wrote about Acts for *Incarnation: Contemporary Writers on the New Testament* (Penguin). Too many of the contributors to that book took the tough meat of modern commentary and criticism and sandwiched it in the white bread of their childhood memories. Woiwode, though, wrote about Christianity as a believing adult. In *Acts*, he describes in detail how he was born again. He was raised a Roman Catholic in North Dakota (he recalls a German-American priest declaiming on First Corinthians: "Does that mean, wives, that you must submit to him when he asks you to go to bet wid him? *Yes!*"). In college he became "an agnostic humanist, a hedonist roarer—the kind you want to stay far from if he's had one too many." He went on to have success as a novelist and college teacher, but diabetes, a drinking problem, and marital difficulties, as well as a generalized loathing of contemporary American life, sent him back to Christianity and back to North Dakota. As members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (which withdrew from mainstream Presbyterian churches in the 1930s), he and his wife chose their plot of farmland because it is near the only such congregation in the state.

Woiwode writes at length about the glories of the Dakota landscape at harvest time—"the feel of the air and the quality of light then, along with the look of the

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fields...[and] the potbellied clouds that carry rain rolling past all day." And he takes several thousand words to set out his aims for the book, with the uneasy mix of humility and arrogance that characterizes his approach. On the one hand, he wants to introduce students to Scripture and the church and to acknowledge "the ways in which the present church has deviated from the church that develops in Acts." On the other, he believes he's putting his writerly tool to untilled earth in the areas of church, culture, and aesthetics, and he hopes the book "might be the beginning of an opening up in the church in general to the arts and other issues of concern." Beginning with "In the first book, O Theophilus" and moving painstakingly toward "teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered," Woiwode considers virtually every line of the text. His reading is careful and winningly insightful. In his account of the angel's freeing Peter from jail, for example, he observes that "Herod 'examines' the guards, most likely a euphemism for torture, and then executes every one of them. It's for this reason," he goes on, "that Luke takes the time to supply minute details; all the witnesses to these details, and to the impossibility of Peter escaping by other than a supernatural act, are now dead, shut up for good. This is one miraculous event the Jerusalem populace isn't going to hear about."

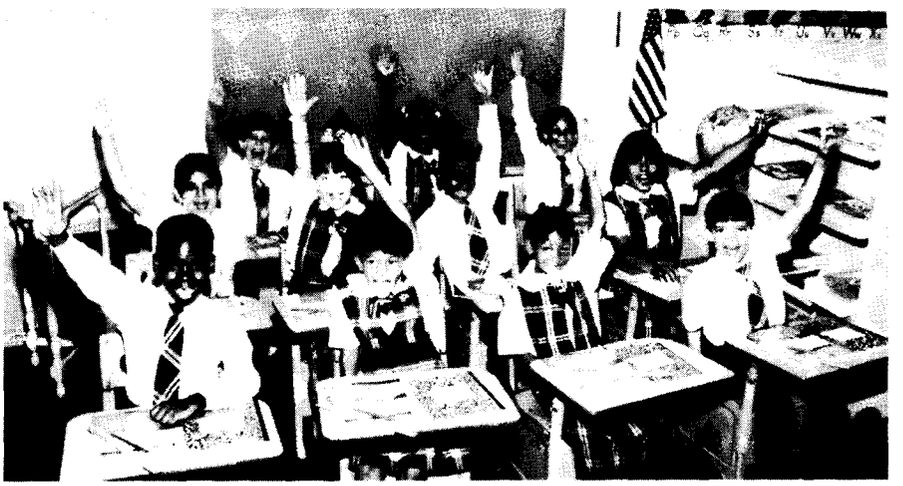
Woiwode himself has what is often called a novelist's eye for details, and in alighting upon the fine points of Acts he identifies himself and Luke as fellow practitioners of the narrative art. He delights in Luke's observation that upon regaining his sight "Paul arose and was baptized; he took food and was strengthened," the ordinary domestic act deepening the pathos of the episode. He highlights Luke's many references to feet—from Peter's healing of a lame man to the martyr's garments laid at Saul's feet—and notes how apt these are in a story about "those moved by the Spirit to convey that gospel by the most common and humble means of transportation, footpower, into the fields that widen from Jerusalem to encompass the World."

As Woiwode stresses, though, Acts is not just a story. It is the Word of God. "Jesus never opens his mouth except to speak doctrine," he declares, and so, by implication, neither do his disciples. Together, their disquisitions and Luke's arrangement of them in Acts prescribe the right ways for Christians to act in the world. It is, I think, in Woiwode's effort to draw out the doctrinal and cultural implications of Acts that problems loom up like those potbellied clouds on the Dakota horizon. They are not his problems so much as those of the whole church, and his encounter with them suggests why Acts remains such an enigmatic book.

First there are the problems that arise within the church. Reasoning from Acts—and from his church's adherence to *sola Scriptura* in doctrinal matters—he pronounces on matters of inspiration ("Either it's the word of God or it isn't, I'm inclined to think"), terminology (he favors "New Covenant" over "New Testament"), the sacraments (as he sees it, only baptism and Communion are valid), baptism (it's okay to baptize infants, and immersion isn't necessary), discipline ("properly and orderly" is a crucial instruction), and the ordination of women (sorry, but Jesus ordained only men). He is particularly agonized by church efforts to sponsor foreign missions while failing to "take care of its own": he believes the missions drain funds that might be used to feed the hungry close to home and sap the energy that should be used to reconvert "the apostate U.S."

The problems of our shallow, fallen-away culture are the other main object of Woiwode's concern. Like Wendell Berry's, his critique of American society puts a rural spin on familiar diatribes about the academy, the government, and the compromised churches. He heaps contempt on urbanites for their lack of gratitude to farmers, decries television's talk-show philosophers and "refried news," and yet ventures that Stephen King is so popular because he alone among contemporary writers dramatizes the war of good and evil.

Now, Woiwode's cultural critique isn't incontrovertibly off base. Nor, seen in themselves, are his doctrinal stands. Their drawbacks have less to do with their objective truth than with their rhetorical



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character. His views on doctrine are quite specific, while his judgments about American culture are generalized to the point of banality. It is not surprising, then, that in the end they have little to do with each other.

This cognitive dissonance, I think, derives mostly from Woiwode's theology of the church. Grounded in *sola Scriptura* and specifically in the Acts' account of the earliest Christians, his understanding of the nature and role of the church doesn't enable him to grapple as he might with the improper and disorderly world. Woiwode would argue the contrary, I suspect, but the shape of his argument here tells against him. Though he warns against sectarianism and castigates a few textbook sects (for example, the Quakers, so many of whom are now so unreservedly worldly), he is wary of discussing the church and the world in the same breath, much less coming to terms with the ways in which, for good and for ill, they intersect. Nor, apart from his views on specific doctrines, does he suggest ways in which today's too worldly church might better conform to the model of Acts. His observation that the church must take care of its own more than it is doing now is a crucial one, and goes a long way. But in exploring just how this might come about, he too often simply sends the reader back to Scripture with his best wishes.

Intentions aside, Woiwode resists any thoroughly worked out identification of today's church with the church of Acts. Moreover, his literary instinct for the particular runs counter to his argument about the unalterable nature of the church. Even as he proposes that today's Christians and those of Acts face the same quandaries, his loving attention to the scriptural details makes clear how very different the world of Acts is from ours: in setting, in social arrangements, in the roles of men and women, in the degree of persecution, in the number and manner of miracles, in mode of transportation (those feet again), and so on. With his novelist's gifts of vivid language and keen observation, Woiwode—in spite of himself—joins Luke in bringing to life a world that is undeniably remote. As a consequence, Woiwode is unpersuasive in suggesting that we can simply pick up our Bible and get on with the business of living a gospel unmediated by our own time and place.

In some sense Woiwode knows this. In asides ranging from an homage to T.S. Eliot to an appraisal of C.S. Lewis's space trilogy to his admiration of John Updike's public identification of himself as a Christian, he seeks to establish that the novelist and the Christian recognize alike the value of particulars and the imperative to teach through their work. From the book's earliest sentences, Woiwode declares that writing—and in particular the writing of *Acts*—is a personal act of faith. And as the book's frankly imitative conclusion makes clear, Woiwode's own model among the early Christians is not Peter or Paul or Stephen but Luke himself. In the end, despite his seemingly uncompromising theology, Woiwode here is a writer reflecting on a favorite book. Vexing as he can be about the letter of the early church, he is finally true to the spirit of it. His act is, as it should be, an artful one. □

IT TAKES ALL KINDS

SAINTS & SINNERS
Lawrence Wright
Alfred A. Knopf, $24, 266 pp.

Catherine Walsh

Six controversial religious leaders are profiled in this often fascinating book: Walker Railey, Jimmy Swaggart, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Anton LeVey, Will Campbell, and Matthew Fox. Lawrence Wright's interest in these figures, he notes in the preface, stems both from journalistic curiosity and his own spiritual search. "Journalists have never known exactly what to do with religion," he admits, adding that members of his profession tend "to look upon religion as a marketplace of the weird and the absurd." Wright is a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, a frequent contributor to *Rolling Stone* and *Texas Monthly* (where shorter versions of these profiles first appeared), and a self-described ex-Methodist. Deciding around midlife that his unexamined agnosticism was a cop out, he went on a personal and professional quest: "I thought that by writing about people with various kinds of beliefs, I might find something worth believing, some anchor to secure the spiritual restlessness that was my constant shadow. Perhaps only a journalist, who lives so much of his life vicariously, would think this way."

It is no accident that Wright chose to focus on a minister accused of trying to murder his wife, a television evangelist brought down by a scandal involving prostitutes, one of America's best-known atheists, the founder of the Church of Satan, a Southern Baptist preacher whose ministry included the Ku Klux Klan, and a New Age Catholic priest. Throughout the book Wright admits that he is drawn to the bizarre and to extremes: belief and unbelief, salvation and damnation, good and evil, saints and sinners. (Mother Teresa turned down Wright's request to write about her.) Those who have achieved fame and notoriety because of a religious zeal, who are cloaked in a "mask" or public persona of a faith, fascinate him: "...[P]owering this quest was my need to strip away masks and find the hidden truth," he writes. He wanted to find out whether "any faith can survive such scrutiny," whether and what he can believe.

There is no small amount of author ego evident in this book. In many ways, it is a personal book—some readers may find it too personal. From the opening profile of Walker Railey, the Methodist minister of Wright's childhood church in Dallas who was acquitted last spring of trying to strangle his wife, the reader is plunged into the author's opinions, reactions, and ruminations. Indeed, the book is often as much about Wright and his spiritual quest as it is about his subjects. But Wright is a compelling writer. His approach, while some-

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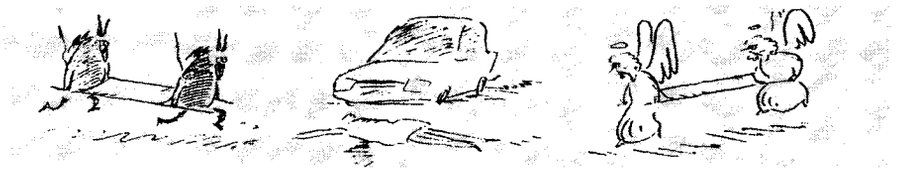
times too self-conscious and a bit contrived, seems honest and it engaged me as a reader—even as I questioned his interpretations.

The portraits of Will Campbell, who has been called a white Martin Luther King, Jr., by some, and of Matthew Fox, recently dismissed from the Dominican Order, are worth the price of the book. Almost as riveting are the essays on Railey and Jimmy Swaggart. I found the chapters on O'Hair and LeVey less interesting.

Many citizens of Dallas were outraged when the Reverend Walker L. Railey of the First United Methodist Church was acquitted of attempted murder. Many believe that he is responsible for the persistent vegetative state his wife Peggy has been in since 1987. (Nine days after his wife was assaulted, Railey tried to commit suicide. Shortly thereafter, his affair with another woman was revealed.) The downfall of Railey—a prominent liberal pastor who was an outspoken critic of racism in Dallas and who many assumed would become a bishop—is presented as a sort of morality play. So, too, is the more well-known downfall of Jimmy Swaggart. "They tried to purge what they called demons inside them; they tried to become as hallowed and sanctified as the masks they wore," the author writes in the preface. "Instead, their demons, their repressed needs, their disowned selves, whatever one might call them, took control."

The essays on Madalyn O'Hair, as an archetype of doubt, and on Anton LeVey, as an archetype of evil, are disturbing. Wright admires their moral courage in "explor[ing] the dark, uncertain territories of the human spirit." He also believes they possess "a certain purity that one might otherwise ascribe to religious ascetics." He argues that the 1964 Supreme Court decision banning public school prayer—a decision that will be forever associated with O'Hair—was part of a secularization of society that was both intellectually liberating and socially ruinous. In the chapter on LeVey, Wright raises important questions regarding the rising phenomenon of satanic cults and their uncertain link with child abuse.

Will Campbell, a counselor to freedom riders and demonstrators at lunch counter sit-ins, became a legend in the civil rights movement. But when the liberal, Yale-educated, Southern Baptist preacher first



reached out to Klan members in the late '60s, he was bitterly criticized and misunderstood. His favorite axiom is: "We're all bastards, but God loves us anyway." Wright brings out Campbell's anti-institutionalism, and his human warts and faults in an essay that bears eloquent testimony to the power of love and Christian belief.

In Wright's final essay, we participate with Matthew Fox in a sweat lodge ceremony on Scotland's remote northern shore. Easter weekend at Findhorn, a New Age community, is in turns hilarious and moving. (One woman in the sweat lodge ceremony prays to the spirit that lives in her pansies.) Coming to a place that is "so far out," explains Fox toward the end of the weekend, helped him to reaffirm his own Christianity—a point made all the more poignant and ironic in light of his recent dismissal from the Dominicans.

Fox's troubled relationship with his father is explored in moving detail in the essay. George Fox had been raised and educated by Augustinian priests, who rescued him as a child from Chicago's slums and a chaotic, abusive family. He went on to become a football legend at Villanova University (where he was appointed to the same all-American team as Vince Lombardi), and later earned his living coaching college football. An angry man and a militant Catholic, George was a tough, demanding father to his seven children. He was thrilled, however, when young Tim entered the Dominicans and became Father Matthew. Tim, who had had childhood polio and was physically frail, now had his father's respect—even reverence.

But Matt Fox did not turn out to be the kind of priest his father had expected. When George lay dying of a brain tumor in 1987, his son went to visit him in the hospital: "'I'll bet you wish I'd been an ordinary parish priest, don't you?' Matt asked. His father squeezed his hand very hard. 'Yes, I do,' he said earnestly, 'yes, I do.' He still had a lot of power, even at the end. 'Well, Dad,' Matt said tearfully, 'I couldn't have been the kind of priest I am without the courage you taught me.'"

This essay provides a fascinating look at both Fox and Wright, at the converging quests of a confused, creation-spirituality-centered priest and a confused, agnostic journalist. □

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A PARTIAL SPIRIT

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE
A Universal Affirmation
Jürgen Moltmann
Fortress Press, $24.95, 358 pp.

Garrett Green

The original German subtitle of Jürgen Moltmann's book promises "A Holistic Pneumatology," that is, a comprehensive theology of the Holy Spirit that overcomes the difficulties and deficiencies of earlier treatments of the doctrine. The brief introduction encourages those expectations by sketching the origins of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the early church and presenting the major points of controversy it has engendered in its long history. In particular, Moltmann stresses the *filioque* (the addition by the Western church of the phrase "and the Son" to the Nicene Creed's affirmation that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father"), which provided the official rationale for the separation of Eastern Orthodox Christians from the West. The introduction also comments critically on the work of several twentieth-century theologians, including Karl Barth and Hendrik Berkhof on the Protestant side, and Karl Rahner and Heribert Mühlen among Roman Catholics.

The promise of the introduction "to develop a *trinitarian pneumatology* out of the experience and theology of the Holy Spirit" is fulfilled only partially and haphazardly. Having identified major shortcomings in earlier theologians, Moltmann fails to follow through with careful analysis and criticism of their work. The omission is particularly egregious in the case of Barth, Moltmann's own teacher and the twentieth-century theologian who has done the most to revive theological interest in the Holy Spirit.

Moltmann's cavil at Barth—that he sets up an "antithesis between revelation and experience," thereby replacing "the theological immanentism which he complained about by a theological transcendentalism"—contains a clue to the central motivation, and the central shortcoming, of *The Spirit of Life*. Moltmann wants to recover the immediate experience of the Spirit, including its relation to the body and to nature, which has been obscured by the "continuing Platonization of Christianity." His attempt to establish a theology of experience in explicit contrast to a theology of revelation falls into the very errors that Barth argued so persuasively against in the theological liberalism of an earlier generation. Not only does he offer no answer to Barth, but he also ignores George Lindbeck's more recent critique of "experiential expressivism" in theology, and Wayne Proudfoot's penetrating philosophical demonstration of the problematic nature of all appeals to "experience" as evidence for truth claims (*Religious Experience*, 1985). Proceeding in a manner reminiscent of Paul Tillich, or of the early work of David Tracy (whom he does not mention), Moltmann looks to various "dimensions of experience" for signs of God. He discovers that it is "still possible to talk about the experience of God...in the nonobjective context of human experience of the self," the same ground so amply, and I think fruitlessly, plowed by theologians from Schleiermacher to Bultmann.

His discussion of biblical experience of the Spirit yields richer results, especially concerning the relations between the Spirit and the Son in trinitarian theology. The relation of biblical experience to the preceding argument from general experience is, however, never clarified. Moltmann's desire to do cultural theology based on certain liberal premises about the nature of reliable knowledge competes awkwardly with the biblical theology he learned from Barth. The result is an unsatisfactory juxtaposition of apparently incompatible theological methods. In short, if common human experience gives access to God, why should we look to the Bible? But if the Bible does indeed witness to the unique self-revelation of God, what reason could we have for turning to a general experience unformed by Scripture?

Despite the uneven nature of the book as a whole, *The Spirit of Life* contains some ideas that deserve a hearing. At several points, especially in the final chapter, Moltmann contributes to ecumenical discussion through a careful analysis of the *filioque* both in historical terms and in relation to contemporary discussions with Eastern Orthodoxy. Even readers who are not convinced by his argument that the *filioque* "is superfluous, not required, and...can consequently be struck out" will profit from his discussion of the issues. It is no coincidence that Moltmann holds the ecumenical movement to be "without doubt the most important Christian event of the twentieth century."

Also interesting and valuable is another of Moltmann's long-standing theological concerns: mystical theology, including the issues of action, meditation, and contemplation. Though it lacks integration into the larger task of the book, Moltmann's appreciative consideration of mystics such as Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross contains useful insights. In a theologian so prominently identified with political and liberation theology, this attention to the mystics is noteworthy. Moltmann clearly finds them compatible, as evidenced by his striking aside that "today prison is a very special place for the Christian experience of God."

One of the unfortunate by-products of the German university system is the endless stream of books by senior professors who rush the manuscripts of their lectures into print, often without the requisite deliberation, revision, and condensation. The result is all too often repetitive and loosely written books like this one. Readers with sufficient patience will nevertheless discover some gold among the dross: one finds passages in *The Spirit of Life* worthy of the early Moltmann, who so greatly influenced theological discussion a generation ago with such exemplary books as *Theology of Hope* (1967) and *The Crucified God* (1974). □

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AND SO CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES

SO FAR FROM GOD
Ana Castillo
W.W. Norton, $19.95, 252 pp.

Ilan Stavans

The recent renaissance of Latino letters is led by a number of very accomplished women. This, of course, is good news. It has, after all, taken far too long to find Hispanic women a room of their own in the library of world literature. With the exception of Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz, a seventeenth-century Mexican nun who astonished the Spanish-speaking world with her conceptual sonnets and philosophical prose (Octavio Paz wrote a spellbinding biography, *Sor Juana: Or, The Traps of Faith,* [*see Commonweal,* January 27, 1989]), women have rarely been read and discussed by mainstream Latino culture. Rosario Castellanos, Isabel Allende, Elena Poniatowska, and Gabriela Mistral—the latter received the 1945 Nobel Prize—are a few of the better-known women authors. Prominent among the new wave of Latino writers in English are Sandra Cisneros, Julia Alvarez, and Cristina Garcia. In opening a window across gender lines, each revisits the Hispanic's innermost fears and hopes.

On the very same list is Ana Castillo, a veteran novelist, poet, translator, and editor whose previous books were published by small presses in Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. Unfortunately, Castillo remains relatively unnoticed by the media. She is the most daring and experimental of Latino novelists, and as American novelists Robert Coover and William Gaddis well know, experimentalism has its costs. Born in 1953 in Chicago and now living in Albuquerque, Castillo was educated at Northern Illinois University and the University of Chicago. She is the author of *Sapogonia: An Anti-Romance in 3/8 Meter*, published in 1989, and of the poetry collections *Women Are Not Roses, The Invitation*, and *My Father Was a Toltec.* Her most memorable work, to my mind, is *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, an avant-garde epistolary novel published in 1986 and recently reissued by Anchor-Doubleday. *Letters* received a Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award.

The novel concerns the friendship of two independent Hispanic women, Alicia and Teresa, whom we accompany, through the device of introspective letters, from their youthful travels to Mexico to their middle-years in the United States. Stylistically *Letters* is a tribute to Julio Cortázar, the Argentine master responsible for *Hopscotch*, a novel typical of the sixties' French *nouveau roman*, and is designed as a labyrinth in which the writer suggests at least two possible sequences for reading—two possible ways of ordering the chapters. Similarly, Castillo's book offers three alternative readings: one for the conformist, another for the cynic, and the last for the Quixotic. Among the very few people I know who have read *The Maxquiahuala Letters*, none (including me) has had the patience to attempt each of the three possibilities.

While Castillo's experimental spirit, much like Carlos Fuentes's, often strikes me as derivative and academically fashionable, her desire to find creative alternatives and to take risks is admirable. An accomplished parodist, Castillo's obsession, it seems, is to turn popular and sophisticated genres upside down—to revisit their structure by decomposing them. In recent years, however, her avant-garde ambitions seem to be fading. Lately, she has become a client of Susan Bergholtz, a powerful New York literary agent whose list includes such Latino writers as Cisneros, Alvarez, and Rudolfo A. Anaya. In many ways, Bergholtz is occupying a role similar to that of Carmen Balcells in Barcelona, who launched the careers of south-of-the-border luminaries such as Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa. Bergholtz is convincing major publishing houses to put big bucks into novels by and about Hispanics. Moving from the periphery to the center necessarily entails sacrifice, however. *So Far from God* is a case in point: the experimental spirit is absent here.

The novel's intent is original: to parody the Spanish-speaking *telenovela*, e.g., the popular television soap operas that enchant millions in Mexico and South America. Framed by two decades of life in Tome, a small hamlet in central New Mexico, the novel tells the story of a Chicana mother, Sofia, and her four daughters: Fe, Esperanza, Caridad (their names, as Spanish speakers can testify, recall a famous south-of-the-border melodrama), and La Loca. The terrain is overtly sentimental and cartoonish. Magic realism is combined with social satire: whores, miracles, prophecies, resurrections, and a visit to the Chicano activism of the late sixties intertwine.

Melodrama is indeed the key word here. Castillo is involved in a dramatic embroidery characterized by heavy reliance on suspense, sensational episodes, and romantic sentiment. Any parody works through a tacit agreement between writer and reader, who share the knowledge of the genre parodied and understand the rules of the game. Unfortunately, with an overabundance of stereotypes and its crowded cast of theatrical characters, *So Far from God* stumbles from the outset. Castillo loses control of her marionettes. Even more disturbing, Castillo is never quite sure

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whether to ridicule her characters or idealize them in spite of their superficiality. As a result, the novel is uneven, conventional, and often annoying.

Still, we must pay attention to Ana Castillo. In due time, her creativity will match her passion to experiment and the outcome will be formidable. In fact, of all the Hispanic writers in the firmament of the current Latino renaissance, she strikes me as the most intellectually sophisticated and thus might end up producing the most intriguing books. Unlike most of her colleagues, a sense of tradition can be found in Castillo's approach to the novel. She is a deeply committed reader whose art, I'm afraid, is not necessarily for the masses. Her tastes are singular, but she has yet to write the book that will display her talent in its full splendor. □

A CHILLING CLARITY

THE COLLECTED STORIES
John McGahern
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, $24, 408 pp.

Elizabeth Shannon

When John McGahern's first novel, *The Barracks*, was published twenty years ago, a reviewer in the *London Spectator* said; "...McGahern's development will be well worth watching." He might have added that each of his ensuing books would be well worth reading. Since the publication of *The Barracks*, which won the A.E. Memorial Award, McGahern has written three more novels, three collections of short stories, and one play. His early promise is fulfilled. He has become one of Ireland's great contemporary writers. No one writes about the emotional starvation of the Irish with more chilling clarity, and no one describes the beauty of the country more poetically.

The language is sparse and justifies each word. In one of these stories, the character admires the manner in which his brother stated the business of an uncle just-died to the family lawyer: "As he spoke, Philly marveled at his brother. Even if it meant saving his own life he'd never have been able to put the business so neatly without sidetracking or leaving something out." Mr. McGahern could have been describing his own stylistic skill.

Bleakness and despair are the underside of the Irish character. They appear as a litany in the early stories of this collection. The failures of relationships are chronicled with spare and taut language. Lives are ruined or made unbearable by long-held and well-nurtured grudges. Undisciplined emotions spew out bitter, vindictive accusations. Robust ambition is stifled by old cynicism. Youth and hope wither with boredom and drink. But just when the reader is about to abandon all hope along with McGahern's characters, the humor, black and ironic, jumps out to shake a fist defiantly at the gloom. In "High Ground," a bright young scholar, mourning the failure and subsequent alcoholism of a revered teacher, stops outside the pub one evening and overhears the teacher, in his cups, describing to his fellow drinkers just why, exactly, that particular village has produced such extraordinary intelligent men:

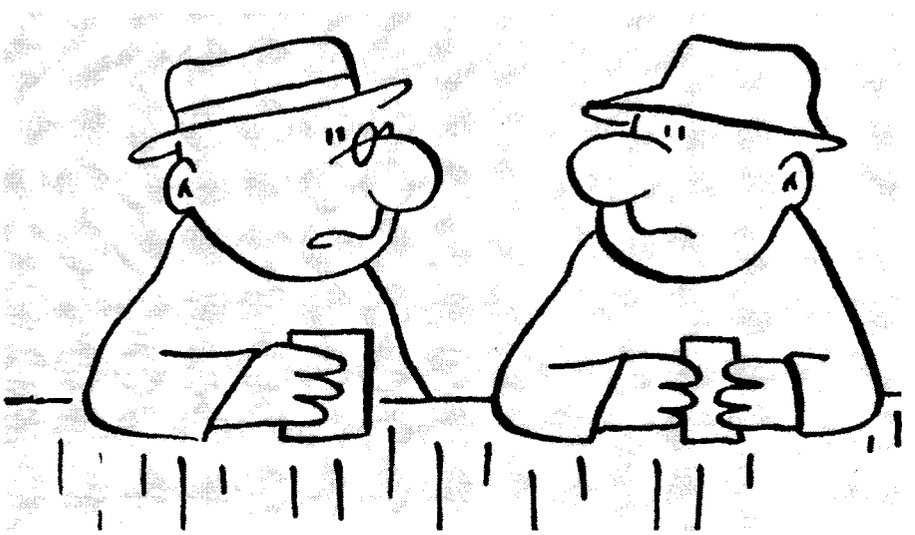
"If you had to pick one thing, Master, what would you put those brains down to?"

"Well, the people with the brains mostly stayed here. They had no choice...so that the brains was passed on to the next generation. Then there's the trees. There's the water. And we're very high up here. We're practically at the source of the Shannon. If I had to pick one thing more than another, I'd put it down to that. I'd attribute it to the high ground."

And against the hopelessness there is always the nurturing land: the radiance of a sunset over bogs, the simple, satisfying pleasure of haymaking on a summer day, the power and majesty of the sea. Ireland's landscape creates a stage of awesome beauty that gives a stoic dignity to the sometimes cruel and forlorn drama played out in its midst.

School teachers, country policemen, civil servants roam through McGahern's stories. He knows them well. In "Strandhill, the Sea," Mr. Ryan, a teacher, is held accountable for all knowledge until he is counseled by Ingolsby, a retired lecturer of English. "Never feel you have to know anything because you happen to teach. Never let them bully you with their assumptions of what you should be. Say you don't know, that it can be discovered in books if they're interested. It's only pretending to know something that's embarrassing."

There is humanity and compassion in



"I've gone from being cautiously optimistic to being recklessly pessimistic."

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Casey, the policeman who has to arrest a creamery manager for embezzlement. He invites the disgraced manager to share his fireside on his first night in jail, and is sympathetic to his condition: "You'd think it was God Almighty we were offending. What's an old creamery anyhow? It'll still go on taking in milk, turning our butter. No. Only in law is it anything at all."

The women in the stories, as in most of McGahern's works, are often victims or heroines. Their tragic exits, either by choice or by death, cause pain and suffering. The men whose lives they touch need them and want them, but they are watchful and wary of being hurt, of being left alone again. Their wariness creates silence, leaves the crucial words unsaid, hidden, like jewels locked away in a bank vault. The owner knows they are there, but the pleasure of their luster is forgone.

The stories in this collection become happier as they progress, as if the author has become more optimistic. You know that things will turn out all right for the couple in "Bank Holiday"; they will marry and make each other happy. The brother in "The Country Funeral" will leave the oil fields of Saudi and return to his family roots in Sligo and will be content there.

But lest things become too good and endings become too cheerful, we are brought up short by William Kirkwood, the impoverished Anglo-Irish landowner-turned-Catholic who finds middle-aged happiness with a good and sensible neighbor, Mary Kennedy. Ah, we sigh. Things are going to work out for them...until Mary tells William with chilling finality about the old, loyal Kirkwood servant: "Annie May will have to be given notice." And William was left wondering whether "there was any way his marriage could take place without bringing suffering on two people who had been a great part of his life, who had done nothing themselves to deserve being driven out into a world they were hardly prepared for."

These are wonderful stories. Read them with the same clear eye of Mr. McGahern. □

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VANITY FAIR'S ANARCHIST

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT
Christopher Hitchens
Verso, $27.95, 353 pp.

Michael O. Garvey

Christopher Hitchens writes prolifically for the *Nation* and *Vanity Fair*, two very different journals which bore and depress me respectively, so his work was fairly new to me when I began reading this series of essays. In some corner of what's left of the Catholic ghetto—our kitchen, maybe—I'd heard about Hitchens's denunciation of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, so I turned to that essay first. And there, sure enough, that little old Albanian nun familiar to most of us for her uncompromising devotion to the poor, sick, dying, and despised is described as "a dangerous and sinister person" who whores after power, stolen money, and the affections of the powerful; whose "ostensible work of charity" is really "propaganda for the Vatican's heinous policy of compelling the faithful to breed," etc., etc., etc.

Now, admitting that for any writer who wants to addlepate the bourgeoisie, a saint who is also a global television celebrity presents a nearly irresistible target, this piece is as good an illustration as you're likely to find of the observation (which Peter Viereck made in these pages about forty years ago) that anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of liberals. Bigotry is weird and contagious stuff, and its hard for this Irish-American Catholic to read Hitchens's simplistic, meanspirited, and slightly nutty observations on the Catholic church without succumbing to a corresponding Anglophobia. The guy's been all over the third world like ugly on a pig and claims never to have met "modest and self-sacrificing missionaries." (But then, Brit tourists *always* see only what they want to see, and they always seem to think the natives will understand them if they shout.) While writing about the plight of the oppressed people of Central America, Hitchens mentions Archbishop Oscar Romero only in passing and Father Ignacio Ellacuría and his murdered companions not at all, but while trashing some admittedly foolish things Graham Greene once said about Catholicism and Marxism, he notices only one thing about the church in Latin America: that "the death squads, the *Contras*, and the General (Pinochet) all claimed—and received—Catholic blessing."

So the charitable thing to do is to assume that Hitchens was sick or drunk or something when he wrote these pieces. Besides, a writer in the pay of *Vanity Fair* who can accuse Mother Teresa, or really anyone else, of embracing "the worst of capitalism" is charmingly unencumbered by self-consciousness, and that's an advantage in a profession which includes folks like Roger Rosenblatt and Anna Quindlen. And how can any generous, tolerant person among us dislike a writer who refers to the "smirking, perjured features of Elliott Abrams," and to a recently installed Supreme Court justice as "Clarence ('Bitch set me up')

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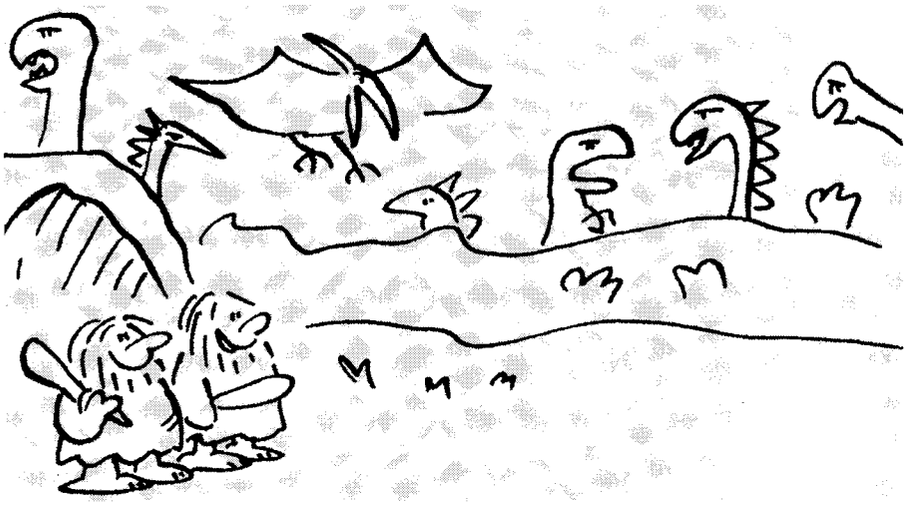

"Ah! This is the kind of day that makes you glad you're a carnivore!"

Thomas," or who can say of Henry Kissinger's evolution from "a foe of Zionism when it looked like losing in 1948" to "an advocate of its most racialist and absolutist application when it was a power to be reckoned with" that "there are no ironies to ponder here, unless you consider Hannibal Lecter an ironist." With the exception of Mother Teresa, he hates all the right people.

Introducing the collection, Hitchens announces his preference for "the generously interpreted interest of all against the renewal of what Orwell termed the 'smelly little orthodoxies,'" and shakes out his rhetorical skirmish line: "For the sake of argument, then, one must never let a euphemism or a false consolation pass uncontested." As a writer, he stands by this creed at least as impressively as Orwell stood by his and as Mother Teresa stands by ours.

G.K. Chesterton, in *Orthodoxy*, wrote about how the "strongest saints and the strongest skeptics" have in common a belief in Original Sin, "which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved." A sort of humanist skepticism is Hitchens's religion. His writing blends a hatred of established fatuities—whether of the Right, the Left, the New or Old Right or Left, the church, the state, the media, or the Whole Shebang—with the furtive compassion of one who loathes sentimentality and loves justice equally.

And he always manages to have fun. In a meditation on political correctitude, for instance, he goes baying after leftish linguistic silliness as enthusiastically as Rush Limbaugh ever dreamt of doing, but then wheels on the pack: "Just as those who call for 'English Only' believe themselves to be speaking English when they are mouthing a mediocre patois, and just as those who yell for 'Western civilization' cannot tell Athens, Georgia, from Erasmus Darwin, so those who snicker at the latest 'PC' gag are generally willing slaves to the most half-baked jargon." He adds that "when every newscaster in the country uses the knee-jerk term 'peace process,' or discourses about 'credibility,' or describes some bloodsoaked impostor as 'a moderate,' the deadening of language has gone so far that it's almost impossible to ironize."

One shrewd and luminous essay on anarchism begins with a memory of a Trafalgar Square demonstration during which Hitchens and others satirized apartheid by dressing up like South African policemen and demanding to see the "passes" of random, baffled Londoners. Disturbed by the fact that "everybody deferred to the strange uniform, and cursed the bureaucratic announcement they must somehow have missed," he suspected the general acquiescence "hinted at something...ghastly and servile." He concludes by commending "the indispensable anarchist who ought to dwell in all of us. The one who pushes away the proffered Kool-Aid even when it comes from the chalice of Jones the Redeemer, the one who asks the South African cop in Trafalgar Square for his name and number, the little boy in *Lord of the Flies*...who gazes defiantly at the latest fetish of the gang and manages nervously to get out the words: 'Pig's Head on a Stick.'" The presence of that inner anarchist is a gift (whoops! pardon the smelly little orthodoxy) which agnostics and believers alike ought to celebrate, if not revere. After all, many souls inflamed with precisely that courage to speak truth to power become the very martyrs and missionaries Hitchens has managed to avoid in his travels.

The essays collected here concern topics from the Gulf War to the emerging (or surviving) literary communities of Eastern Europe to the facile and annoying cynicism of P.J. O'Rourke to the pleasures of smoking and drinking too much. When writing about politics, which is what he writes about most of the time, Hitchens almost invariably deploys his acidulous prose and intimidating erudition from the Left and at the service of the forgotten, vulnerable, and voiceless. This disposition naturally arrays him against the Kissingers, Abramses, Thatchers, Castros, Reagans, and Clintons of this world, and I can't help but suspect that it also accounts for his remarkable, if not very loudly expressed, independence on the subject of legal abortion, which he—a *Nation* columnist and a contributor to *Vanity Fair*, for crying out loud—admits makes him squeamish.

Nearly alone among mainstream journalists, Hitchens overlooked all that Gennifer Flowers foolishness in order to consider the far more significant calculations underwriting then-Governor Bill Clinton's election year decision to "preempt any Hortonizing of his future ambitions" by having Rickey Ray Rector, a lobotomized Arkansas convict, put to death. "So what," he asks, "is all this garbage about 'the new paradigm' of Clinton's forthright Southern petty-bourgeois thrusting innovative fearless blah blah blah blah? In a test of principle where even the polls have shown that people do not demand the death penalty, he opted to maintain the foulest traditions and for the meanest purpose. As the pundits keep saying, he is a man to watch."

Amen. So, for much happier reasons, is Hitchens, even if it means reading the *Nation*. □

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Ecumenism & Christian spirituality

Lawrence S. Cunningham

InterVarsity Press, I dare say, is little known to the readership of this journal. It is affiliated with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship which is an evangelical movement active on college campuses here and abroad. A recent newsletter of their press advertised Mulholland's book on spirituality so I wrote them for a copy. My interest was piqued because of the ecumenical ramifications implicit in the Catholic tradition of spirituality now attracting the attention of so many diverse clienteles including thoughtful Evangelicals. If, as is often alleged, the bridge between Buddhists and Christians is best found in the area of spiritual *experience* (e.g., monasticism), how much more should this be true of those who glory in the name Christian?

Mulholland, a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, wrote this book as a result of his experiences preparing ministers for the active ministry. Drawing heavily, but not exclusively, on traditional Catholic sources, his focus is on the life of prayer, meditation on the Word of God, and appropriate asceticism. Most of what he says makes eminent common sense and would be familiar territory to those conversant with Catholic forms of spiritual practice. His book was most intriguing for me in seeing how some traditional themes of Catholic spirituality get refracted through, and expressed in, a Christian tradition which is not my own.

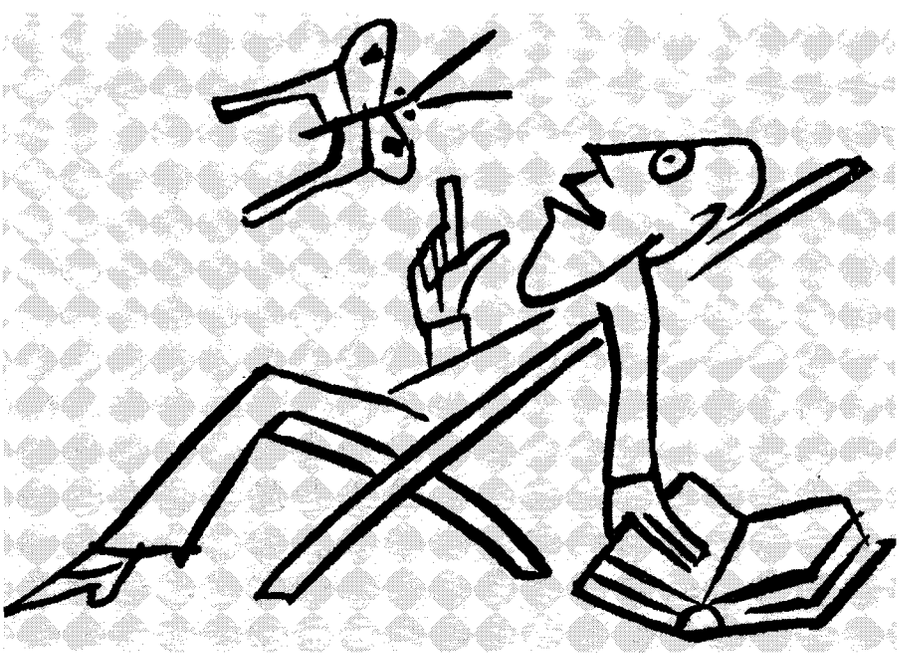
Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map to Spiritual Formation, *by M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., InterVarsity Press, $8.99, 173 pp.*

What is most encouraging, however, is that Mulholland has written this book for a broad evangelical audience and had it published by a house that serves that constituency. That is a small sign that we might find a promising area for ecumenical community at the level of prayer and contemplative community. Works like these and other signs (e.g., the recently founded and ecumenically oriented Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality) are all harbingers of a new plateau of ecumenical labor.

The basis for Mulholland's book is a series of courses/conferences he gave to Methodist pastors on spiritual formation. He sees spiritual formation as a "process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others." I like that definition (it may have been better to add a trinitarian edge to it), especially the coda: "for the sake of others." Mulholland is at pains throughout his work to see Christian formation in tandem with the mission of the church and not merely as an individualistic exercise.

His reading is quite ecumenical since it depends on authors like Kenneth Leech (Anglican), Parker Palmer and Richard Foster (Society of Friends), and the Catholic Henri Nouwen. Even when he turns to an old wheezer like Adolphe Tanquerey's *The Spiritual Life* he has enough good sense not to cram his description of spiritual formation into rigid neoscholastic categories. Like the Catholic William H. Shannon, Mulholland adds to the old monastic tradition of reading leading to meditation, prayer, and contemplation (*lectio/meditatio/oratio/contemplatio*) by beginning with *silentio* (*sic*; he means *silentium*) and ending with *incarnatio*. He is in good company since his final step is close to the old Dominican motto of "handing on to others the fruits of what has been contemplated."

If I have any substantial critique of Mulholland's insightful book it is his seeming sympathy for Jungian personality analysis and his infatuation with things like the Myers-Briggs psychological assessment. This judgment is, I realize, the reaction of a grumpily suspicious mind, but it seems to me that there is already too



LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *chairs the department of theology at the University of Notre Dame.*

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much psychologizing in spiritual formation/spiritual direction. A little goes a long way and, to my relief, the word "enneagram" never appears in this book.

Gandhi is one of the most important ecumenical figures of the modern world. He came to know Christianity during his days in London when he was in touch with Christian socialists (many inspired by a Tolstoyan vision of the faith) who were convinced pacifists. In South Africa, and later in his native India, he drew deeply from the New Testament and other Christian sources (his favorite hymn was Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light") for his own spiritual enrichment. Many of his most devoted followers were Christians.

Gandhi on Christianity, *edited by Robert Ellsberg, Orbis, $12.95, 117 pp.*

Ellsberg's anthology draws from many of Gandhi's writings in order to sketch out what might be called a Gandhian Christology. Christ was, for Gandhi, a true *avatar* and a Son of God but not, he insisted firmly, *the* Son of God. Christ, in the eyes of Gandhi, is best understood in terms of his unconditional love, forgiveness, and willingness to sacrifice; hence Gandhi's interest in the meaning of the cross.

Gandhi had clear criticisms of Christianity. He criticized its cultural imperialism; he perceived it to be a destroyer of Indian culture with its aggressive missionary work. His constant plea was for Christians to become more Christian and, in that process, to help Muslims and Hindus to be more faithful to their own traditions. In a curious—and nonsystematic—fashion he anticipated the intense contemporary discussions among Christian theologians over a whole range of issues: inculturation; the Christian view of salvation; the nature of the missionary enterprise; the uniqueness of Christ as savior of the world. One cannot but help think of those issues while reading the selections Ellsberg has culled for this volume.

To flesh out this rather slim collection, Ellsberg provides essays by Diana Eck (of Harvard), peace activist James Douglass, and the Indian Jesuit Ignatius Jesudasan on various aspects of Gandhi's thought in relation to Christ and Christianity. The final essay, by the Maryknoll missionary (in Bangladesh) Bob McCahill, on his mission of "presence" among a largely Muslim population, is a moving and edifying description of Gandhian principles in action.

We hardly need reminding that Gandhi had an enormous influence on people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Cesar Chavez, and thousands of other lovers of peace and reconciliation. For that reason alone any work on Gandhi is welcome, not so much for the originality of his thought (his views on Christianity were simple, straightforward, and oft repeated as this anthology shows) but for the power of his example.

Diana Eck's book is quite simply wonderful. A professor of comparative religion and Indian Studies at Harvard, she is also a committed Methodist who has been long active in ecumenical affairs, most conspicuously with the World Council of Churches. Her book on the dialogue between the world's religions is set in the context of a narrative describing her own Christian upbringing in Bozeman, Montana, and her long-time residence in the holy city of Benares, India (about which city she has written a wonderful book), as a student of Hindu culture, languages, and religious practice.

Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Benares, *by Diana Eck, Beacon, $24, 266 pp.*

Eck is a practitioner of what my own university's theologian John Dunne has called "passing over"—a sympathetic move by which one enters into the experience of others finally to return to one's own tradition enriched. She is no simple New Age syncretist; Eck is unapologetically a Christian but one who believes in pluralism. By pluralism, Eck writes in a fine chapter, she means not relativism but a commitment to one's tradition with a firm willingness to learn from others and to accept particularity while engaged in deep interreligious dialogue. Eck shows how well such dialogue works in the chapters where she considers how the classic doctrines of God, Christ, and Holy Spirit get enlarged by a consideration of Hindu modes of thinking about the nature of divinity, the place of the *avatar*, and the dynamic element in creation itself.

The need for such comparative study is patent as anyone who pays attention to the shifting demographics of this country knows. Hindus, Buddhist, Jains, and Muslims are increasingly coming to this country, and bringing with them religious ideas that are "foreign" to most Americans. Some estimate that there will be more Muslims than Jews in the U.S. within a generation. Members of other Asian religions already outnumber Episcopalians and Presbyterians in some parts of the United States (e.g., New York).

Eck ends her book with the image of the New City and the river of life described by John in the Book of Revelation. That new city is now being built, and that river now flows in this country. Eck's splendid book is a guide to its mysteries and to its promises. Jargon-free and wearing her erudition lightly, she possesses a crisp prose style that makes her study accessible to any intelligent reader. It is a profoundly ecumenical work. I highly recommend it.

New Visions reproduces a series of lectures sponsored by Tulane University's chair of Judeo-Christian Studies. Although the subtitle advertises the Jewish/Christian dialogue, not all the essays deal *ex professo* with that subject; indeed, only one essay in the book is by a Jew (Jacob Petuchowski's study of the Lord's Prayer from the perspective of Jewish prayer) and some of the essays are not about Judaism at all.

New Visions: Historical and Theological Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Dialogue, *edited by Val Ambrose McInnes, Crossroad, $18.95, 165 pp.*

Like most potpourris of this sort, there are some excellent things to be found. In this volume. I would single out Sean

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Freyne's two essays in which he contrasts Jewish/Christian interaction in the first century, when Christians were a struggling minority, to the Christians of the fourth century, who had, as a group, "triumphed." Jürgen Moltmann's study of Christology in the context of the Christian-Jewish dialogue and Lawrence Frizzell's assessment of the same dialogue now that we are a generation away from *Nostra aetate* were helpful. Robert Wilken's essay on patristic hagiography is first rate (and on a subject dear to my heart) but hardly fits under the ecumenical rubric advertised in the subtitle of this volume.

What *New Visions* lacks is a coherent theme; what it provides is a horizon of issues more or less connected with ecumenical dialogue. For a more organically sustained look at the dialogue between Christians and Jews I would recommend, as a first reading, two other anthologies, from the same publisher: *Overcoming Fear between Jews and Christians* (1993) edited by James Charlesworth, and the collection of essays by Eugene Fisher: *Faith without Prejudice* (1993).

I always look out for good books on the Psalms and McCann's volume is one of

A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms, *by J. Clinton McCann, Jr., Abingdon, $16.95, 204 pp.*

the more interesting that has come my way. A professor at Eden Theological Seminary, he combines scholarly expertise in the Old Testament with the concerns of a pastor and expertise as a Christian theologian. The precise focus of his approach to the psalms is that they reflect *Torah,* by which he means *instruction* and not *law,* as the term is too often and too narrowly defined. Drawing on the classical studies of Gunkel and Mowinckel, McCann accepts the results of form criticism and the insistence that the psalms had a cultic function, but he is more interested in the final shape of the psalter as a whole (the psalter's integrity in its final canonical shape is a given for McCann) and, further, the theological world view reflected in the psalter.

McCann says at the beginning of his study that one should read his book with an open Bible (which is exactly the way I read it). His individual chapters (which focus on a single psalm and cognate examples from other psalms) move dialectically; e.g., he presents a chapter on "Instruction for Praise" and, conversely, "Praise as Instruction," etc. His final chapter is on the psalter and Jesus Christ. This is not a Christological reading of the psalter (McCann is too sophisticated an exegete for that), but an excursus on the way(s) in which the psalter shapes the picture of Jesus in the New Testament and, also, the warrant for the Christian use of the Hebrew psalter. An appendix deals with the singing of the psalter in the church with a nice list of aids for the encouragement of such a practice.

McCann chairs the Psalms group of the Society of Biblical Literature and his expertise shows through in his intelligent commentary. There is a Scripture index at the end of the volume but no topical index. I have two minor criticisms of the book. First, it would have been useful to have had a bibliography (I culled one from the footnotes). Second, at places, McCann the exegete gives way to McCann the preacher. In the midst of careful readings of the text, we sometimes are handed homilies that editorialize on current affairs. The space would have been better spent on more reflections on the psalms since the author does that so well. Apart from those niggling critiques, I would place this book right next to Walter Brueggemann's *The Message of the Psalms* (Augsburg, 1984) since both volumes combine exegetical sophistication with pastoral sensitivity. Both authors do full justice to the psalter as a product of God's revelation to the Jews while showing how we as Christians share in that revelation. They give an extremely sensitive and nuanced approach to the old monastic dictum *semper in ore psalmus; semper in corde Christus* (Keep a psalm always on the tongue; keep Christ always in the heart).

Stookey's interesting volume is a survey of eucharistic teaching in the Protestant tradition with special attention given to those communities which, like the Methodists, still celebrate the "Lord's Supper" with some regularity. His intention is twofold: to help Protestants appreciate the rich fullness of eucharistic doctrine and to suggest ways in which the Eucharist may be better celebrated in church.

He begins with a rapid survey of the emphases of the New Testament on the Eucharist, noting, correctly, that eucharistic imagery suffuses many New Testament pericopes beyond those which provide the narrative of institution at the Last Supper. The middle chapters of the book

Eucharist: Christ's Feast with the Church, *by Laurence Hull Stookey, Abingdon, $13.95, 208 pp.*

then speak about the development of eucharistic doctrine in the churches both East and West with a particular focus on the thought of the Reformers. Given the historical complexity of this matter, one should not be surprised that this material is a bit sketchy. It is also not always quite accurate: Stookey somehow thinks that the notion of the Eucharist as sacrifice is explicable only in the context of the application of the sacrifice to the souls in purgatory. This, of course, is quite wide of the mark.

The final chapters offer suggestions for the congregational celebration of the Eucharist. Catholics will soon learn that issues of interest to themselves are also very much a part of Protestant discussions: who may come to Communion (a great ecumenical problem); how those who cannot attend the liturgy may communicate while having some sense of being part of a community (Stookey has some good ideas about commissioning eucharistic ministers); with what degree of formality/informality liturgies should be celebrated.

In an earlier column I reviewed David Power's deeply learned *The Eucharistic Mystery* (Crossroad, 1993). That is still the work I would recommend on this subject, but Stookey's more pastoral and popular book is worth reading to get a Protestant perspective on the Eucharist and valuable for the deep pastoral sense that it displays. □

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

Involve the laity

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: My heart goes out to Fr. Joseph Breen. As parish council president in a large parish, I have seen at first hand the enormous demands that parish priests face today. I have come to believe, however, that allowing a married clergy at this time would not be the wisest course for the church. I fear that such a move now would lead to the resurgence of the outmoded hierarchical parish structure, with a dominant clerical class and a passive, marginalized laity.

It is unfortunate that when Fr. Breen looks at a large parish he sees only one or two priests ministering to, say, 10,000 Catholics. If our common baptism is taken seriously, the parish should be seen as potentially having 10,000 ministers, with each member possessing a Spirit-given gift for some special ministry. The real problem I have found in parish life is not so much the lack of ordained priests as that many parishioners have not yet felt the need to accept responsibility for their own gifts as ministers of the Good News, whether it be in outreach to the disadvantaged, marriage preparation and enrichment, adult education, or youth ministry. They are still locked into the old lay mentality, expecting all such parish functions to be performed by the clergy and vowed religious.

Out of the necessity caused by the lack of priests and religious, this attitude is changing, but it will take more time for parishes to build a strong tradition of lay involvement and leadership. Until such time, perhaps the Spirit is deliberately holding back the church from changing the rule of mandatory celibacy.

MARTIN J. HAGAN

Stay with tradition

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: It is unfortunate that the issue of allowing priests to marry has been identified with a "liberal" agenda. The tradition of a married clergy in the Catholic church predates celibacy by almost a thousand years! If a married priesthood is on any agenda, it should be a *traditionalist* one.

One need only consult the experience of Eastern Christianity, where celibacy has always been optional, to understand the tradition. Yet celibacy has not become a disvalue in the Eastern church: even today, though by and large the parish clergy in the Eastern church are married, there are men and women who freely choose to live a celibate life, most of them in the context of a monastic community.

Except for a few, our bishops seem unconcerned by the priest shortage, leaving us with a perception that our leaders would rather have "priestless parishes" than married priests. What will it take for them to see what is happening? I base the question on a national survey figure showing 32 percent of the Catholic population going to church and 68 percent unchurched!

Mandatory celibacy is not the root of the problem, but it contributes to it significantly. We can talk about programs until we are blue in the face; we can write any number of theologically pastoral letters; we can buy lots of advertising time—the challenge won't diminish if we just wait it out.

I applaud Fr. Joe Breen for his honesty, candor, and courage; thank you for publishing his letter in full. KEN LOVASIK

Nurturing cynics

Warner Robins, Ga.

To the Editors: Thank you for publishing the text of Fr. Joseph Breen's letter to the American Catholic bishops. Bishop Edward Kmiec's reaction proved Fr. Breen's point: "The refusal of the bishops even to discuss these problems breeds cynicism...."

It is truly sad and scary that a legitimate concern cannot be aired or argued among the People of God. If there are legitimate arguments for the present clerical system, then Bishop Kmiec and others have nothing to fear by allowing the discussion.

(REV.) FRED NIJEM

Gotham isn't ordinary

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In a commentary billed as a "Report from New York City," Washington, D.C., consultant Wallace Katz advised New York's Mayor-elect Rudolph Giuliani to emulate the rebuilding strategies of "ordinary cities" such as Cleveland and Pittsburgh, rather than capitalize on New York's unique stature as a global capital ["Make Gotham Governable," November 19, 1993]. Katz's analysis and recommendations reflect a small vision and a dated understanding of the political and economic dynamics of America's most extraordinary metropolis.

During the past decade, New Yorkers have carried out the nation's largest and most successful urban rebuilding program, fueled by investment of over $10 billion in affordable housing and economic development in neighborhoods outside central Manhattan. City expenditures on community-based housing initiatives have exceeded the combined total spent by the next fifty cities in the nation. As a result, New York has reversed the exodus of middle-class citizens and stemmed the deterioration of residential communities that threatened its viability in the 1970s.

New York absorbs a larger share of America's poor and receives proportionately less help from the federal government than do other cities. How, then, has New York remained viable? For one thing, we have learned to build successful partnerships among local government, grassroots community organizations, and business and corporate leadership, both local and global. An example is the New York City Partnership, which Katz singles out for derision. This organization has been responsible for attracting some $1.5 billion in private funds to produce almost 10,000 units of affordable housing in the city's most blighted communities, simultaneously creating thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in business opportunities for low-income and minority residents.

Rather than accept Katz's cynical approach, we would urge Mayor Giluliani to follow the vision articulated by the late Robert F. Wagner, Jr., a close adviser until his untimely death last November. In a 1987 report titled "New York Ascendant," Wagner described the need to balance the demands of maintaining New York as a world city and, equally impor-

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tant, a city of neighborhoods. His vision embraced the full diversity of New York City and recognized that we are strong enough and caring enought to aspire for something greater than ordinary.

JOHN P. MASCOTTE

The writer is chairman of the national board of directors of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a nonprofit organization that provides financial and technical assistance to nonprofit, neighborhood-based community organizations.

Get Gotham clean again

Waterford, Conn.

To the Editors: In this my first letter to *Commonweal,* I want to thank you for the very great enjoyment, stimulation, interest, and communication evoked with each issue. Communication? Yes; my subscription is a gift from my brother Larry. After reading each issue, he and I get together by phone to discuss its contents. Through *Commonweal*, we are much in touch!

I would like to add a comment on the Wallace Katz article. My siblings and I grew up in Stamford, Connecticut, in the shadow of New York City, and our late father often carted us around that magic, glittering, noisy, happy, clattering, CLEAN city. I remember very well the men in white uniforms with push barrels who kept "Gotham" sparkling clean. Where have they gone? Along with making the city governable, is it possible Mayor Giuliani might make it clean again? Oh, happy day!

HELEN KANE

Life, death, the cross

Houston, Tex.

To the Editors: Thomas Shannon's interrogator was on the mark when he suggested that Shannon's belief in immortality had everything to do with his attitude toward euthanasia ["How Long Must We Preserve Life?," December 3, 1993].

One can, of course, offer rational and cultural reasons for retaining the ban on all doctor-assisted suicide and doctor-induced death: the menace to the image of the medical profession; the influence of deep but possibly temporary depression; the increased availability of more effective pain control; the danger to the old, the feeble, the unwanted; the possibility (likelihood) of mistaken diagnoses; and others.

In the final analysis, however, even after we have placed a dying person in a humane hospice, even after we have managed pain and anxiety by means of drugs and counseling, there remain those cases of intractable pain and despair in which all we can do, humanly speaking, is to watch the person die in agony. In such cases, particularly when the person asks for death as release, human compassion and even logic suggest we should help to grant that wish.

Only if we view death and suffering in a supernatural light, after the example of Jesus, does any of this suffering make sense. Only if I can in faith identify with the crucified Lord can I endure and find meaning in my own terminal suffering.

Because we as a people no longer believe in the value of suffering, the passage of laws to permit doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia is inevitable. But this is not all bad. It will make Christians reexamine their own attitudes and choose not only whether to live as a Christian but also whether to die as a Christian. This is the price we will have to pay for our freedom and for our faith. PETER J. RIGA

Seeing in symbols

Hiroshima, Japan

To the Editors: I'd like to comment on the relevance of religious symbols to Catholic identity discussed by Margaret O'Brien Steinfels ["The Laity and the Leadership Crisis," September 10, 1993].

Prior to Vatican II, Catholics took their symbols seriously, but saw those symbols as important in and of themselves. Being Catholic meant obedience to church laws (meatless Fridays, Lenten fasts, Sunday Mass). We toed the line because it was hell if we didn't, which led us to agonize over how many ounces of bacon eaten on Friday constituted mortal sin.

We did not see that religious symbols have significance insofar as they represent an *art* of living, a way of life. Vatican II should have made that connection clear. Instead, we wound up discarding the symbols as trivial and superficial demonstrations of Catholic identity. These changes were supposed to indicate that we had grown up. What they really showed was that we didn't understand the significance of the symbolic.

You can reduce any of our symbols to gibberish if you take the symbols literally. Friday abstinence is a good example. Perhaps a better example is the Blessed Trinity. A literal interpretation of the Trinity is embarrassing. We are on safer ground if we view the Father-Son-Holy Spirit symbols analogically, and then consider what meaning these symbols have for us, not whether the symbols stand for facts.

Religious symbols represent a reality that goes beyond what is verifiable. These symbols are ambiguous, which is why we need help in determining their meaning and appreciating their relevance to who we are. Although the search for the "real" Jesus may provide us with useful psychological insights, the symbolic Jesus will continue to test our faith and to fashion whatever meaning we have as Catholics.

I don't know how Catholics are going to recapture their identity, but I do think we need to hear much more from our poets than from our theologians and social scientists. THOMAS F. MADER

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What is bothering me

JOHN COGLEY

I'll tell you what is bothering me. How does a writer keep himself from getting such a vested interest in certain ideas that he feels called upon to come to their rescue when they are attacked, mainly because he feels that an attack on them is an attack on him?

In the beginning a writer is like a blank piece of paper. But if you want to be a writer you have to write about something, and you begin to take positions on questions of the day. You study a situation and try to see it whole; you think about the issues involved and weigh them; finally you reach a conclusion. You set down your conclusions on paper. One conclusion leads to another. Once you are known for the kind of conclusions you habitually reach, you are assigned to what is called a school of thought.

No one registers for a school of thought; the matriculation is gradual. But even the most independent minds discover one day that, lo, they are wearing an old school tie. Maybe the tie is called liberal, maybe conservative, maybe middle-of-the-road; it does not matter much. The important thing is that one's thinking is now regarded as part of a group effort. The writer begins to think of Us one way and of Them another way. He begins to feel a tug of loyalty every time he sits down to a typewriter. It is not necessarily loyalty to the truth but to a partisan interest, for the writer, who never intended to, has become a partisan and can very easily find himself affected with a partisan's view of things.

The writer does not necessarily become a liar, though some do. But if he finds himself paring and shaping the truth he deals with, for the good of the "cause"—however nebulous the cause might be—he is the next thing to a liar. Worst of all, of course, he can deceive himself. He can tell himself that he is justified in withholding this truth and playing up that—for after all should he give aid to the enemy or scandal to the little ones? Or he may deceive himself that he is preserving a respectful silence out of consideration for the transcendent claims of a higher truth. The Truth which is the Party, the Movement, or the Cause makes its claim, and the separate truths which are the description of immediate realities are slightly distorted and even flatly denied. How many liars have lied for Truth? Only the totalitarians endow deception of this kind with the dignity of doctrine; but even honest men are bedeviled by the temptation.

This is not the kind of column in which one should mention names. I will not cite examples. But study the work of journalists, especially those who deal in ideas. How many are like campaign orators? All wisdom is found in their camp. The opposition never has a case; its position is not the product of earnest study or careful attention to the facts—it is the fruit of blind prejudice at best and callous iniquity at worst. The truth, they lead you to believe, finds its only servants in their camp—and, *mirabile dictu*, it just happens that the truth in any given instance serves their partisan interests.

I do not hold with the conspiracy thesis. I do not believe that writers are bought out by powerful interests. Very few can be bought if only because, for the kind of people who become writers, pride is a much greater temptation than greed. But buying them would not be necessary in any case.

The *National Review* speaks of the Liberal Establishment, which I take it is not supposed to be a conspiracy but a product of mindless conformity. The so-called Right Wing is often described as an Establishment along the same lines. There is a grain of fact in the charge that such establishments exist. Each establishment, of course, tries to give the impression that its existence is explained by the hold that truth has on good men who can think, while the other evolved from witless men plunging beyond their depth. But suppose we dismiss such *partis pris* absurdities for the moment and ask why such establishments do exist.

I think they exist, among other reasons, because writers tend to get this vested interest in certain ideas, as do magazine and newspaper editors, and come to feel as protective about them as a doting parent.

Unless ideas, even well-thought-out ideas, are the product of infallibility, there is usually some truth to be found in the attacks made on them. Nor are factual truths always of immediate service to even the best ideas. So a truly honest writer must root for the opposing team now and then; he may even find that a sincere devotion to the truth will turn him temporarily into a traitor to the partisan cause. He may find from time to time that he has to cross the lines on a specific issue, to the dismay and disapproval of those who had thought of him as one of "ours." But if the writer wants to stay honest he has no other choice. Reality simply does not shape itself, nor should it be shaped, to conform to even the most noble cause.

In the long run the writer's real obligation is to the reality of things; only secondarily can he be a partisan. The honest writer, I am afraid, will always be an untrustworthy partisan. But such are the appeals and the claims of partisanship that only few writers realize when they have ceased to be honest.

That is what is bothering me. □

John Cogley (1916-1976) was a Commonweal *editor from 1949 to 1955, a columnist until 1964. Later he served as an editor at the* New York Times, *as presidential campaign adviser for John F. Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, and as founding editor of* The Center Magazine. *This column is reprinted from the issue of November 15, 1957. See also Et Cetera, page 4.*

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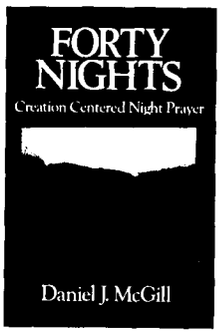

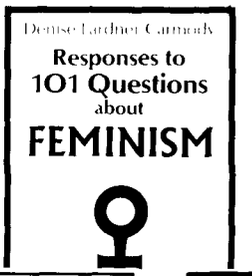

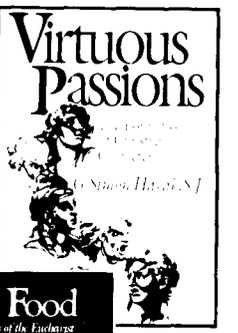

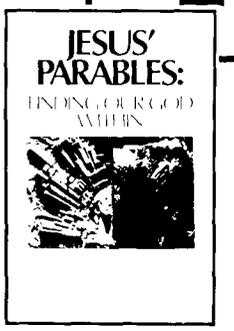

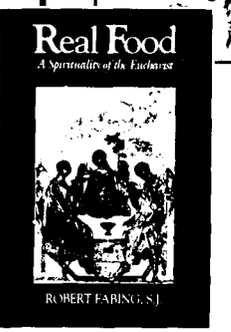

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